THE Fundamental Truths OF CHRISTIANITY,

Briefly hinted at by way of

Queſtion and Anſwer.

To which is added a

TREATISE OF PRAYER

In the ſame Method.

By *GEORGE KEITH.*

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THE

Fundamental Truths

OF

CHRISTIANITY

Briefly Introduced by way of

Question and Answer,

FOR

THE BENEFIT

OF

YOUTH

THE PREFACE.

Friendly Reader,

AS there is nothing more neceſſary to be underſtood and minded, than the Doctrine of Chriſtianity, which in it ſelf is plain and eaſie; ſo nothing hath been

more clouded, obſcured, and burthened by the wild and numerous Notions of Carnal Minded Man, by which true Wiſdom hath been darkned. The Author of the enſuing Treatiſes (who is now removed out of Europe) *hath been bleſſed with a ſingular Faculty of expreſſing himſelf both briefly and clearly (as is well known to ſuch as have peruſed his Writings) which inclined me to preſent theſe to the publick. I hope Reader thou wilt find them anſwer this*

Cha-

Character, and therefore it is left to thy Judgment, upon tryal, by

Thy Sincere Friend

London the 27th. of the 5th. Month, 1687.

R. B.

THE

ERRATA.

PAge 14. l. 6. for *oud* read *and*, l. ult r. *is the Faith*; in the second *Preface*, p. 2. l. 6. f. *When* r. *Where*, p. 25. l. 3. f. *that* r. *who*, p. 31. l. 24. dele *must*, and add, *they wait for them the more*, p. 55. l. 21. f. *hath* r. *have*, p. 57. l. 25. f. *no* r. *not*, p. 62. l. 23. r. *upon what*, p. 108 l. 5. dele *of*, p. 113. l. 2. r. *tempore*, p. 122. l. 8. f. *leisure* r. *service*. p. 127. l. 22. f. *there* r. *here*.

THE Fundamental Truths OF CHRISTIANITY

Briefly hinted at by way of

Queſtion and Anſwer.

Queſt. *OF whom have we our Being, our Living, and Moving, and all the good things we enjoy?*

Anſw. Of God.

Q. *How know we that?*

A. There is ſomewhat in our own hearts that declareth it unto us.

Q. *Is that our own Natural Reaſon as men?*

A. Tho we might gather it even from Reaſon as men; yet there is ſomwhat in us that doth more convincingly and manifeſtly declare it unto us, than our own Reaſon as Men.

Q. *How do we diſtinguiſh it from Reaſon?*

A. Very plainly, becauſe it oft teacheth us this and many other true things, when we are not exerciſing our Reaſon, but ſtill and quiet in our minds, yea, it oft preventeth all reaſonings in us, and in a more ready and immediate way Convinceth us than Reaſon can do.

Q. *How ſo?*

A. Becauſe Reaſon teacheth us things by a way of Diſcourſe and Inference, gathering a ſecond thing from a firſt, and a third from a ſecond, and a fourth from a third, *&c.* which way is but Mediate, and Commonly is weariſom and tedious.

Q. *How doth that other teach us?*

A. By ſetting the things before our underſtandings ſimply and immediately, even as when the outward Light giveth us to ſee the ſhapes and colour of outward things immediately, without the need or uſe of our Reaſon.

Q. *How may this other thing be called which is in us, a diſtinct principle from our Reaſon as Men?*

A. It may be called (according to Scripture) a Spiritual and Divine Light which hath the ſame uſe to the mind that the outward Light hath to the eye.

Q. *What other Names hath it according to Scripture?* *A.* The

A. The Word of God, becauſe thereby God ſpeaketh his Mind and Will, unto the Hearts and Souls of Men, as one man ſpeaketh his mind to another by the Word of his Mouth.

Q. *Is this Light and Word God himſelf?*

A. It is one immediate manifeſtation of him, which tho it may be diſtinguiſhed from him, yet is not, nor cannot be divided or ſeparated from him, for he is with it and in it, and is the Fountain and Life of it.

Q. *What other difference is there betwixt our natural Reaſon, and this Principle?*

A. Our Natural Reaſon may be corrupted, and is oft corrupted, and ſo may teach us contrary things, unto what this teacheth, but this is altogether uncorruptible.

Q. *What other difference is there betwixt them?*

A. The Teachings of our Natural Reaſon, even of things that may be true, are but dry and barren, and void of that living vertue, influence and vigour, which the teachings of this principle have, for this principle is quick and powerful and pregnant, or full of Heavenly and Divine Vertue and life.

Q. *But do they not differ original y, as to their very Nature and Being?*

A. Yea they do, the one is Natural, the

other Supernatural; the one is Humane, the other Divine; the one is an essential property of the Humane Nature, the other is the free Grace and Favour of God given unto man to dignifie and exalt him above his natural estate and condition; if so, he may be more than a natural man, even a Son and Child of God; yea, to have a Name better than of Sons and Daughters.

Q. *Is this Principle given unto all men?*

A. Yea, it is given unto all men.

Q. *For what end is it given unto all?*

A. That they may become the Children of God thereby, and may live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World, as the Children of God; that so after this life (in this present World) they may live with God in the World to come, in the fulness of everlasting Joy, Peace, and Happiness.

Q. *By whom doth this Grace or Gift come upon all Men?*

A. By Jesus Christ, as *John* declared *The Law* (said he) *was given by* Moses, *but Grace and Truth cometh by Jesus Christ*; and of his fulness have we all received Grace for Grace.

Q. *Is Jesus Christ himself given unto all Men, or only His Grace?*

A. He is given unto all men, in so far as he

he is sent of the Father unto all, and is come unto all, and is both offered of the Father as his Gift, and doth also offer himself unto all, so that his Grace is not alone without him, nor he alone without his Grace, they are given together, and are offered together, and are received together.

Q. *How is Christ and his Grace to be distinguished?*

A. No otherwise than as the light, warmth, and influence of the Sun, is from the Sun himself, which proceedeth from the Sun as out of his fulness, according to *John* his declaration, who said, *Out of his fulness have we all received Grace for Grace.*

Q. *How is Christ Jesus come unto all? Is he come outwardly as a man unto all?*

A. He is not come outwardly as a man unto all, tho he is come even outwardly as man for all (so that all may receive the benefit of his outward coming as man, who are not wanting unto themselves) but he is come inwardly unto all, as the true Light, that Lightens every man that comes into the World, and not only as the Light, but as the Resurrection and the Life.

Q. *How is he the Resurrection?*

A. Because he quickeneth and maketh alive the Soul unto God, and raiseth it out of

its Sin, in which as in a Grave it hath lain dead and corrupted, as to the Life of God.

Q. *Is this the general Condition of Men.*

A. Yea, the general Condition of Men in the first state, is, that they are dead in their Sins and Trespasses.

Q. *All men therefore do need Christ, not only to be a Light unto them, but to be the Resurrection and the Life also.*

A. Yea, for they want not only Light unto their Understandings, but they want Life unto their Hearts, and unto all their inward Powers and Affections which are dead (as unto God) so that they cannot move towards him, nor in his Service, but as they are quickned and influenced by him.

Q. *How doth Jesus Christ minister Light and Life unto the Souls of Men?*

A. By his shinings and breathings in their Hearts.

Q. *Is that Immediately, or Mediately, or both?*

A. Both Immediately, and Mediately.

Q. *How Immediately?*

A. Even without all outward means, as by his Free Love and Favour, preventing them before the use of any outward means, and by ministring unto them who have not, nor never had the outward means, for he is

the Light of the World, according to his own Testimony, and as *John* declared of him, *He Lighteth every man that cometh into the World, that all through him might Believe, and Believing might have Eternal Life.* Now if he lighteth all men, then surely he lighteth as well those who have means, as those who want them, and those who want, as those who have them, as truly tho not as equally: And therefore seeing they who want the outward means are Immediately Inlightned and Taught, then surely they who have the outward means are also; otherwise, their priviledg should be the less who have the outward means, and theirs the greater who want them.

Q. *How Mediately?*

A. By the shining and breathings of his own Light and Life, in and through his Faithful Servants, and their Testimonies, whether by Words or Works; all which have a manifestation and ministration of Light and Life in them, to encrease and raise up Light and Life in them, unto whom they minister.

Q. *But if God and Christ minister Light and Life Immediately unto men, are not all means useless and unnecessary?*

A. We are to distinguish betwixt things that

that are absolutely necessary, and things that are necessary in some respect; also betwixt things absolutely necessary, and things very useful and profitable; for many things are greatly useful, which are not absolutely necessary: And thus, though men have no absolute need of outward means for the conveyance of Light and Life unto them, yet the outward means are very useful and helpful unto them.

Q. *Give us one Example in another case?*

A. All men have a Principle of natural Reason in them, which without all outward means (either of Men or Books) teacheth them Immediately some things belonging to Natural Reason; and yet none will deny, but that both Men and Books are very useful and profitable to further us in the knowledge of Natural Things, and in the exercise of our Natural Reason, to the further improving the same.

Q. *But are the Immediate Teachings of God and Christ of absolute necessity unto every man, to give him the True and Saving Knowledge of God?*

A. Yea, they are; for indeed all outward means could do nothing, without the Immediate Teaching and Ministring of God and Christ, by his Holy Spirit, Light and Life; be-

because the Immediate is the Ground and Foundation, or Principle, for, or because of which, the outward means are useful and profitable.

Q. *Give us one Example in another case.*

A. The same as before, for if Men had not an outward and immediate Principle of Natural Reason in them, that taught them immediately some things belonging to Natural Reason. All the Men and Books in the World, though never so convincing, could not gain ground upon them, but because Men have a Principle of Reason in themselves, therefore when things of Reason are presented and offered to them, by Men and Books, they imbrace them and receive them, not simply, or only because the Men and Books say so, but because the innate Principle of Reason in themselves saith so, and doth witness and answer to the same things.

Q. *By this it would seem that Men are taught many more things mediately than immediately.*

A. Yea surely, for according to the aforesaid Example, what men are there (except Fools and Idiots) but the Principle of natural Reason in them teacheth them in the things of natural Reason, above an Hundred to one,

one, more than any Book or Men ever did, or can do? As is manifest in the daily Occurrences and Occasions in the outward life. A man's natural Reason teacheth him a Thousand things which he never learned from Men or Books: Even so the Children of God are taught of God many Divine and Spiritual things, which Men nor Books never did, or could teach them.

Q. *By all this it seemeth that the Knowledg of Divine and Spiritual things, must flow from a Divine and Spiritual Principle in the Heart, and that they cannot be known and learned sufficiently, from or by the natural Principle of natural Reason.*

A. It is even so; for though the natural Reason in a subservient way may be made use of, yet it can no more reach unto the things that are Spiritual and Divine, nor indeed so much, as a Blind-man by all his Reason can reach unto Colours, to judg of them distinctly: or a Deaf-man to judg of Sounds, *&c.* For even as the things of sense are judged or known by a principle of their own Nature, which Reason cannot Immediately reach unto by descending. So the things of Faith, which are Divine and Spiritual, are judged and known by a principle of Faith that is of their own Nature also, to wit,

wit, Divine and Spiritual, which Reason cannot immediately reach unto by its ascending: but as a Man having the Natural Exercise of his Senses, can use his Reason in Natural Things that are sensible; so he who hath the use of his Spiritual Senses, can use the same Reason in Spiritual Things, to wit, in a subservient and subordinate way.

Q. *What is the first thing required of Men, that they may learn of God and Christ Jesus, so as to become wise through those immediate Teachings?*

A. That they believe those Teachings, and receive them in the love of them.

Q. *How can they do that?*

A. Not of themselves, but there is a Vertue in all the Teachings of God and Christ, that is operative and effectual to cause men to believe them, and receive them, and the truth of them in love.

Q. *What is next required of them?*

A. That they continually apply their whole Minds, Souls and Hearts, unto this Spiritual and Divine Principle in them, and unto God and Christ therein, that it may have its universal influence in them and upon them.

Q. *How can they do that?*

A. By its own drawings, or rather by the drawings of God and Christ in it.

Q. *What is the universal Influence?*

A. It is not only of an enlightening nature as to give knowledg, but it is of a quickening nature, and of a leavening, healing, and purifying, and sanctifying nature; more particularly, it hath these two properties, 1. To kill, consume, and destroy Sin both in Fruit and Root, Stock and Branch. 2. To beget Righteousness and Holiness, which comprehends all the Fruits of the Spirit, such as Love, Meekness, Temperance, Patience, Humility, Joy, Peace, Hope and Confidence, *&c.*

Q. *How is the Grace or Gift of God conveyed unto Men at first, and how is it received?*

A. As a small thing, even as a Seed, the least of all Seeds.

Q. *And how is it multiplied and encreased in Mens Hearts?*

A. By its growth in them; for if it doth not grow in them it doth not multiply, but remaineth as dead and barren as unto them, though living in its own nature.

Q. *How doth it grow in Men.*

A. By getting root in the Hearts, even as a grain of Corn, by getting root in the Earth.

Q. *How doth it get root?*

A. It

A. It hath a Native Vertue and influence in it, whereby it taketh root in the Heart naturally, if Men do not resist it; and tho the Ground where it seeketh to take Root, be foul and unfit, yet it hath a cleansing and fitting Vertue in it, to prepare the Ground and make it good and fit, but it requireth Mans consent and concurrence, which it acts and God in it, and with it draweth and moveth effectually the Heart of Man unto.

Q. *But may these drawings and movings be commonly resisted?*

A. Yea they may, and so the work of Man's Salvation may be hindered by Man himself, and that both in the beginning, or when begun in its progress.

Q. *Doth God teach Men all things necessary unto Faith and Godliness by this Principle.*

A. Yea, as he is faithfully and chastly waited upon, believed and followed.

Q. *But hath he not his order in teaching, or doth he teach all at once.*

A. He hath his order, and doth not teach all at once, but line upon line, here a little and there a little, according as a Man can bear, through the gravity of his Principle in them.

Q. *What are the first things he teacheth in and by this Principle?*

A. They

A. To deny Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, to Live Soberly and Righteously, to Live Godly. And when they have ascended by those degrees, he bringeth them into his Holy Mountain, City, House, Kingdom, and Paradise, where he giveth them to enjoy of these Pleasures and Delights, that because of the Sweetness, Beauty and Glory of them, are beyond all utterance or thoughts of Man's Heart.

Q. What are the first beginnings of Gods Work in the Heart after convincement, or enlightening the Understanding?

A. Faith and Repentance.

Q. What is Faith?

A. It is a cleaving of the Soul and Heart of Man unto God and Christ, according to the inward Revelation of his Divine Power, Mercy and Goodness, in the shinings of his own Divine Light, Life and Spirit within him.

Q. Is then the object of Faith God and Christ, as inwardly revealed?

A. Yea.

Q. What Faith then have they, who say, Inward and Immediate Revelation is not the common priviledge of Men, nay, not of the Saints in these daies?

A. They have not the true Faith, which is the only faith of Gods Elect, that worketh by love

love, and purifieth the Heart, and is fruitful of good works; but their Faith is but a Dream and Imagination, which as it findeth them in their Sins, so it leaveth them to live and die in them.

Q. *What is Repentance?*

A. It is a change of the Mind, and of all the Powers of the Soul, and its affections from Sin and Unrighteousness, unto Holiness and Righteousness; so that whereas it loved, desired, and rejoyced in Sin before, and had a distaste of all Righteousness and Holiness, and an aversion and alienation therefrom, now it hath a distaste of Sin universally, and an aversion and alienation from it; and a true and intimate love of all Righteousness and Holiness, desire after it, and joy therein, and more abundantly after and in God and Christ, whose it is.

Q. *How is this Repentance wrought?*

A. By degrees, through the power of God, his Life, his Love, his Judgment, his Mercy, his Goodness, revealed in his own Light by his own Spirit, as the Heart is turned thereunto, and continueth in a steddy and fixed application unto the same. This naturally and gently melteth and thaweth the Heart, and breaketh it into

pieces;

pieces; yea, changeth it from a Heart of Stone into a Heart of Flesh, and maketh it naturally to savour and relish the things of God, which it hated before, and to distrelish and distaste the things of Dishonesty and Unrighteousness, which it loved before.

Q. *What Rule (or Law) hath God given unto Men, to Serve, Obey, and Worship him?*

A. Even the same Divine and Spiritual Principle aforesaid, the Word of God, that is nigh unto us, even in our Mouths and in our Hearts, that we may know it, believe it, and obey it. This is the Law or Rule of the New Covenant, who walk after this Rule, Peace is and shall remain upon them; neither is there any Condemnation unto them, but Justification and Approbation from henceforth and for ever.

CON-

CONCERNING
PRAYER.

I. Some QUESTIONS answered.

II. Some REASONS given, why all PRAYER in Words, whether only conceived in the Heart, or uttered and expressed by the Mouth, should be by the help of the Holy Spirit, helping us to conceive those Words.

III. Some Objections, or seeming Reasons brought, for using set Forms of PRAYER, read out of a Book; as if that reading were PRAYER, Answered: Also a few Words concerning Singing or Praising God with a Psalm.

By G. K.

Printed in the Year 1687.

CONCERNING PRAYER.

To the Loving and Friendly Reader.

SInce It pleased the Lord to give me some knowledg by experience, what True Prayer is; after that I was turned with many others to his Marvelous Light, to believe and walk in it, wherein the deep things of God are seen and opened. Many true and fresh, and living openings have arisen in me concerning Prayer, the nature, use, ends, and manner of it, and how true and right Prayer is, and ought to be acceptably performed; how the Spirit of God assists and helps his Servants and Children to Pray; how he works not only upon their wills and affections, to quicken and excite them, and make them fruitful with good and holy desires, in the art, or exercise of Prayer; but also how he works upon the Understanding, and all the Intellectual Powers, to enlighten them, and give to Man a true and real sense and

understanding of his wants, or of the wants of others, for whom he prayeth, and also of the Love, Mercy, Bounty, and Compassion of the Lord, and the readiness and nearness of his helping hand to supply all his and their wants abundantly. When the Inward and Spiritual Eye is opened by the Lord, to see the Well of Living Water, where the thirsty Soul may drink: And also to see the Lords Table that is richly spread, where it may eat abundantly and be refreshed, and bless and praise the Name of the Lord, for all his great and rich Mercies and Blessings. And if the Spirit of the Lord did not enlighten the Understanding and Mind of Man, to teach him what to seek and pray for, but only did warm, and heat Mens affections, all this would be but a blind Devotion, which all true Protestants cry out against, &c.

That Heavenly and Sacred Fire, that God sends down into the Hearts of his People, is not a dark obscure Fire, but shining and enlightening, and hath Light

as well as Heat in it. The Spirit of Prayer and Supplication, is not only a Spirit of Love, but a Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding.

And though there is a kind of Prayer, that may be, and oft is, without Words either expressed or conceived in the Understanding; because there is a degree of Understanding in Man, that transcendeth all Words: I mean such Words as we commonly use, which are the signs of things signified by them, as Aristotle *defineth Words:* Verba sunt signa rerum, *i. e.* Words *are the signs of things. In which high degree of Understanding, the Spirit and Mind of Man, reacheth to the Divine and Heavenly things themselves, without these words, where the things are words themselves; or where the words and things are not distinct: But the thing is its own word, and the word that signifieth it as the thing it self.*

But Aristotle *so much admired for his worldly Wisdom and Philosophy as it seemeth, knew not this Mystery, nor yet do his*

followers. Notwithstanding of which, because the Lord who is Infinitely Bountiful and Gracious unto men, doth not only inlighten and shine upon this highest part of Man's Understanding, but also causeth his Light and Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding to descend to the lowest degree thereof, even to his Reason and Imagination (for the very Imagination of man is said in Scripture to be wrought upon by the Spirit of God; see Isa. 26. 3. That which is Translated in, and according to the Hebrew, *signifieth Imagination.) See also, 1 Chron. 29. 18. Keep this for ever in the Imagination of the Thoughts, &c. Which inferiour and lower Powers of man's Soul, cannot reach to Divine things, without the signes of Words: Therefore it pleaseth God to work upon the Understandings of Men, so as to make them fruitful to bring forth good and pertinent Words of Truth, as well as upon their minds and affections, to bring forth the fruits of Holy and Spiritual desires. Wherefore the Apostle Prayed to the Lord, that*

that God would establish the true Believers in him, in every good word and work. 2 *Thes.* 2. 17. *Whence I conclude, that good words are as real a Fruit of the Spirit, as good works or desires; and these good words must not be borrowed words from the mouths or lines of others made ready to our Hands, but must spring from the inward fruitfulness of our own Understandings, as the spirit of the Lord doth water them, and make them fruitful after a Heavenly sort. For it is not the Corn that lyeth upon the ground, though ever so abundantly, which hath grown in another Land or Country, that denominates the Ground where it lyeth, to be fruitful; but that is only a fruitful Ground which bringeth forth from within it self, as it is assisted by the Heavenly Rains and Influences, the like Corn, or any other Grain that is good and profitable. And therefore it is not the abundance even of Scripture Words, which a man receives into his memory, or bare natural Understanding, that simply makes his Mind and Understand-*

ing fruitful unto God, but the inward ſenſe and myſtery of Scripture words muſt be opened in him by the Spirit of the Lord, and then the Underſtanding of a man, by the help of the Scripture words, being inwardly and ſpiritually opened by the Holy Spirit, brings forth, as it were, as ſo many Seeds a plentiful Harveſt, where the good Ground of the good and honeſt Heart, yieldeth its fruit, ſome Thirty, ſome Sixty, and ſome an Hundred Fold; and alwaies with ſome increaſe: So that although Scripture words have a moſt excellent ſervice and uſe to the Children of God, and their minds and underſtandings are made fruitful, with the Spiritual knowledg and opening of them by the Spirit of the Lord: As the ground or ſoil is with ſeed ſown in it; yet the underſtanding is not confined to the ſtrict and preciſe number of ſcripture words; but yieldeth an increaſe of other words from the ſame ſpirit, and of the ſame tendency and ſignification: As the ſeed that is ſown, yeildeth more Grains than what was ſown. Theſe and ſuch like openings in great plenty,

to-

to the praise of God, have livingly sprung up in me as concerning Prayer, time after time, and have at the present writing been livingly brought to my remembrance, with an addition of many more, which here I present to all Friendly and Loving Readers, to whose hands this may come for a general serviee; where I have handled and treated of things, I hope soberly and fairly, in the spirit of Love and Meekness, not naming any Persons or Parties by way of reflection to provoke them to anger or dislike; only with some Fervency. But yet in true Love I have reproved and argued against those who pretend to Pray by the Spirit without a set Form, and yet deny the spirits Immediate Teachings and assistance. And tho I aim against Reading set Forms of Prayer, so as to make that Reading to be Prayer it self; yet I am not simply against Reading of Prayers, which have in any measure proceeded from the spirit of God in the Ages past.

Some

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING PRAYER.

And some Reasons that all Prayer in words, whether conceived in the Heart, or uttered and expressed by Mouth, should be by the help of the Spirit, helping us to conceive those words: With an Answer to some Objections, or seeming Reasons brought for using set Forms of Prayer read out of a Book. Also concerning Singing or Praising God with a *Psalm*.

Quest. WHat is Prayer?

A. It is a calling upon the Name of God (through Jesus Christ) and the asking of him in Faith, those things which we should, or do desire.

Q. *What are these things which we should desire and ask of God by Prayer?*

A. They are many, but may be reduced to these Three Heads.

1. The things which are for God's Glory, and the Sanctifying his great Name in the Earth.

2. The things which we stand in need of, or want as to our selves.

3. We are also to Pray for others, even for all men, that they may be saved, whose Day of Salvation is not expired; yea, for our greatest Enemies. Also we are to Pray for the Church of God in general, that God may build her up more and more, preserve and defend her, multiply his Graces, and pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon her, and upon her Members, in their respective places, and especially for those who have a publick Ministry in the Church, that he may more and more qualifie them for so great a work, and open an Effectual Door unto them; and that it may please the Lord to increase the number of Faithful Labourers to work and labour in his Vine-yard. And lastly we are to pray for Kings, and all in Authority, that God may incline their Hearts to do good and just things in the Earth, that we may live a quiet and a peaceable

able life, in all Godliness and Honesty, which is the true end of Government and Magistracy, its being Appointed and Ordained of God.

Q. *What are the things which we are to Pray for us to our selves? Are they only Spiritual things, and such as belong to the Soul? or are they Temporal things also, such as Riches, or encrease of Corn, Wine and Oyl, or Health? If one be in Sickness and Liberty, if one be in in Prison? And if it be not lawful to pray for Riches, or great plenty of Worldly and Temporal Things? May we not at least pray for our necessary Provision, as Food and Raiment, as Christ taught his Disciples saying,* Give us this day our daily Bread.

A. As for Riches or great Plenty of Worldly and Temporal Things, we find no Precept nor Example to commend it as a lawful Thing unto us to Pray for, in all the Scripture; nor indeed are they to be sought for (altho when it pleaseth God to bestow them, in blessing Means sober and lawful Callings and Employments, they are to be received with Thanksgiving) and God is to be Prayed unto, that he may give those who have them a Heart to use them to his Glory; and that they may be as Faithful Stewards of them, especially

to Minister unto others who are in necessity) for many Tentations and Snares do follow Worldly Riches, near as to Temporal or Wordly Necessities, as Food and Raiment, or Health in time of Sickness, and Liberty in case of Bondage or Imprisonment; and other such like things: I do not say it is unlawful to pray for them, providing it be with a due submission to the Will of God, who knows best what is good for us. So that sometimes Sickness, and sometimes Imprisonment is best for us, and other Worldly afflictions, Tryals and Exercises of our Faith, and we stand in need of them, and they are sent to us from God for some good end and purpose: and therefore we should mainly desire that all these things may be Sanctified unto us, and the end and purpose of God in doing us good, may be fully answered in all of them. But I do not find it commanded any where in Scripture, or laid upon us as a necessary duty, to pray for any Temporal or Worldly Thing whatsoever: for Christ did not teach or command his Disciples to seek, or be careful what they should Eat or Drink, or wherewith to be Cloathed; but (said he) *Seek first the Kingdom of God and the Righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added unto*

unto you; So here is a promise that God will give us these things, although we do not ask for them. And he said further, *The Gentiles seek after these things*; importing, that even to pray unto God for Temporal Necessities, was but a part of the Gentiles Religion, which was but low and weak in respect of the Christian Religion, which leads further to ask Spiritual and Heavenly Things, and little or nothing to mind Worldly or Temporal. And Christ said unto them further, *For your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things*, Matth. 6. 31, 32, 33. thereby signifying, that if we did not seek them they would be given us, because we have a provident and tender Father, that regardeth us, and all our Necessities, even as the Fathers of our Flesh provided for us, and gave us things we wanted, when we neither did nor could ask them, as in the time of our Infancy; and as to these words which Christ taught his Disciples to pray, saying, *Give us this day our daily Bread*. That cannot be proved that that Bread was the Natural Bread, that the Natural and Outward Body wanteth. And *Jerome*, one of the Fathers, so called, who lived above twelve hundred years ago, did read or translate the

words

words, *Give us this Day our Super-substantial Bread*; the which Translation, many, called Learned Men, say, the *Greek* will bear. But passing the Translation, it is very unlikely and improbable, that it can be meant of Natural Bread, which is but a Temporal and Corruptible thing; for it is the first Petition in that Prayer, in relation to our selves (the three former Petitions relating especially unto God) and it is placed in order before that Petition, wherein he taught them to Pray for *Forgiveness of Sins*; and the next following, *That we be not led into Temptation, but that God would deliver us from Evil* (or the evil one (to wit the Devil.) Now the matter of the two last Petitions being Spiritual things, how unprobable is it that Christ would teach them to seek first a Temporal thing, such as the Outward and Natural Bread is, before those Spiritual things; when at the same time he bids them *Seek first the Kingdom of God and the Righteousness thereof*: which comprehends all Spiritual things.

Q. *But doth not our Heavenly Father know all the Spiritual things which we have need of, as well as the Temporal, and therefore why should we pray for the one more than the other?*

A. We do not pray for Spiritual things, as

as if we were to inform the Lord that we want them; or as if he did not know that we wanted those things before we pray unto him; for he knoweth most perfectly all our wants, even the most Inward and Spiritual, before we pray unto him, from whose all-seeing Eye nothing can be hid, whether past, present, or to come: But the great cause why the Lord will have us to pray unto him for Spiritual things, is, that thereby our desires are enlarged the more after them; our love is excited unto them, and all the Graces and Vertues, and gracious Gifts of Gods Holy Spirit in us, are thereby quickened and set on work in true Prayer; all which tend to our Sanctification, and promoting us in the same. And seeing the substance of Prayer consists in the Souls desire after God, so as to be joined and united unto him, and be refreshed with his Love and Divine Influences of his Life; and to partake more abundantly of his Spirit; and to taste and feed upon his living Word, which is the same to the Soul that Bread and Meat, and Drink, or any most comfortable thing is unto the Body; and that the Souls desire after those Heavenly and Divine Enjoyments, is enlarged in and by true Prayer: this, as it were, both gives

and encreases the Souls appetite after God, and prepares the Soul for the enjoyment of him, by raising it on high, above all worldly things and the desires thereof; and accordingly *Damascen* and *Augustine* did well describe Prayer to be the ascent or lifting up of the mind unto God. Now the Souls Appetite after God, and the Divine things of his Kingdom, is as necessary to it as Hunger and Thirst is unto the Body: for as the Bodily Hunger and Thirst, 1. Makes the Nourishment which the Body receiveth, comfortable and pleasant unto it. And 2. It is a sign of Bodily Health in ordinary Cases. And 3. It causeth a good Digestion, so that the Body is the better and the more Nourished; even so it is as to the Souls Appetite and Desire after God, and the Refreshings that come from his Heavenly Presence, the which in Scripture is called a *Hunger and Thirst*, as Christ said, *Blessed are they that Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness*, &c. And said *David*, *My Soul thirsteth for God*, Psal. 42. 2. The Soul which thus hungers and thirsts after God, and the enjoyment of him, when it receiveth this enjoyment in any measure. Oh! How sweet and comfortable it is to the hungry Soul, but the full Soul even loaths

loaths the Hony-comb, whereas to the hungry Soul every bitter thing is sweet; yea, even the Judgments and Chastnings of the Spirit of the Lord, which are sent unto the Soul, as it hath need of them, are sweet and precious unto it. 2. The Spiritual Hunger and Thirst of the Soul, is alwaies a sign of the Souls Health and prosperous Condition. And 3. The Inward and Spiritual Food and Nourishment that the Soul receiveth, even that Living Bread and Water of Life, which cometh down from Heaven, doth the more nourish up the Soul unto Eternal Life, and causeth it to grow the more up into the Heavenly Image and Similitude of God and Christ; in all Holiness and Righteousness, and Spiritual Beauty and Glory, and also in Spiritual Might and Strength; and likewise in Wisdom and Counsel, and Knowledg and Understanding. The more that the Souls Desires are enlarged after God, so the more the Soul desireth the more it feedeth upon the Bread of Life; which Bread is Christ the living Word; and the more it feedeth the more it groweth, and is nourished up unto his Heavenly and Divine Image: and the more it is nourished and groweth, the more again it desireth after God. And

beſides, In the true deſire of the Soul after God and Chriſt, there is a true attractive Vertue, ſo to ſpeak, which draweth or ſucketh the Water of Life out of the Wells of Salvation, *Iſa.* 12. 3. And both draweth Life from Chriſt (the Fountain of it) into the Soul, and draweth the Soul after Chriſt: Even as the deſire that we have after the Air, cauſeth us to ſuck or draw it in to the inward parts of the Body: and as the Infants deſire after the Mothers Milk, cauſeth it to ſuck and draw at the Breaſt, thus the Souls deſire after God and Chriſt, draweth in a ſweet and Heavenly Divine Breathing of his bleſſed Spirit, which it again breatheth forth in Holy Breathings of Prayers and Thankſgivings: and thoſe Souls, whoſe deſires are living and freſh after God, as new born Babes (as the Scripture ſaith) *They deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word that they may grow thereby.* And thus it may appear why we ſhould pray rather and moſtly, if not only and altogether for Spiritual and Heavenly, then for Carnal and Earthly Things; becauſe the deſire of Spiritual and Heavenly Things, doth purifie and ſanctifie the Soul, and raiſeth it up after them, and maketh the Soul like unto them; yea, transformeth into the nature and

and likeness of them; for Love and Desire have a wonderful transforming power in them, whether Natural or Spiritual. And therefore the love of Heavenly and Spiritual Things, makes the Soul Heavenly and Spiritual; the love of God in the Soul, makes it Godly and God-like, and the love of Christ makes it Christ-like, and to resemble him in his manifold Graces and Vertues: but the love and desire of Earthly and Worldly Things, makes not the Soul Heavenly and Spiritual, but rather Earthly and Worldly; and therefore they are little or nothing to be desired, in comparison of those Heavenly and Spiritual Things.

Q. How and after what manner is Prayer to be distinguished?

A. Prayer is either Private or Publick, as also it is either Mental or Vocal. Mental Prayer is the Cry of the Heart unto or after God, as it is said, *Lam.* 2. 18. *Their Heart cryed unto the Lord.* And as the Prophet *Isaiah*, 26. 9. said, *With my Soul have I desired thee in the Night, yea, with my Spirit within me will I seek thee early.* Again, Mental Prayer may be either with words conceived in the Heart, but not expressed with the Mouth and Lips, as that of the *Psalmist* 4. 4. *Commune with your own Heart*

upon your Bed: Or as the old Latine hath it, *Speak in your Hearts*, &c. *and be ſtill.* And ſuch kind of Mental Prayer was that which *Abraham's* Servant uſed, *Gen.* 24. 45. *And* (ſaid he) *before I had done ſpeaking in my Heart*, &c. As alſo that of *Moſes* in the Red Sea, *Exod.* 14. 15. *And the Lord ſaid unto* Moſes, *wherefore cryeſt thou unto me.* But we read not that any words of Prayer were expreſſed by *Moſes* at that time; or that (to wit, Mental Prayer) may be without all words, ſo much as conceived in the mind, in a deep ſilence of all words, ſuch as that in the *Pſalms* 62. 1. Where according to the Hebrew it is, *Truly my Soul is ſilent unto God.* For ſeeing the ſubſtance of Prayer conſiſteth in the Souls deſire after God, and that deſire may be in the Soul without words, ſo much as conceived; even as a natural deſire after Meat or Drink, may be in us without words, therefore there is a Prayer that may be in the Heart or Spirit of Man, without words, ſo much as inwardly conceived; the which Prayer is oft times the moſt effectual and permanent, for it may remain continually in the Soul, without any intermiſſion, as it doth in every good man; by which Prayer he doth pray continually, or without ceaſing,

as

as the Scripture requireth, for the Souls desire after God, may remain a constant and perpetual thing, by which it continually presseth after God, as the stone continually inclineth to the center; or as the Needle of the Compass, that is well touched with the Load-stone, and hath drunk in, or received the magnetical virtue thereof, continually pointeth Northward; and if it be at any time diverted by any violent motion, it ceaseth not until it hath arrived at its former station: And thus it is with the soul that is effectually touched with Gods living Arm and Power, that its desire is continually after him; and that desire causeth in it a continual motion towards him, and to his holy and blessed will to know and perform it. Vocal Prayer is that which is made unto God, both with the Heart and Mouth, in words audibly uttered or expressed. And betwixt Mental and Vocal Prayer, there is a mixt sort, where the words are not audibly expressed to the hearing of others, but yet come up from the Heart into the Mouth, where they are secretly or silently whispered, such as the Prayer of *Hannah* was, 1 *Sam.* 1. 12, 13. *And it came to pass as she continued praying before the Lord, that* Eli *marked her Mouth. Now* Hannah *she*

spake in her Heart, only her Lips moved, but her Voice was not heard, &c.

Q. *May Vocal Prayer in words that are audible to others at some distance, be used in private, when a man is alone by himself?*

A. Upon some solemn or extraordinary occasions it may be used, as if such a wicked Law should be made that no man should pray unto God, as in the case of *Daniel*, cap. 7. Where it was decreed that none should ask any thing for thirty daies, but of the King; *Daniel* found himself the more concerned to bear a testimony against such a Law or Decree, that even his private Prayer came under the observation of his accusers, so that he could not satisfie himself with meer inward and mental Prayer, which none of them could observe. And it seemeth it had been *Daniel*'s custom formerly so to do, he living among Idolaters, that so he might more abundantly bear a Testimony against their false Worship, and for the true Worship of the True and Living God. Again, 2. Vocal Prayer in private may be the more freely used, when any hath the opportunity of some remote or retired place, where none are within the reach of hearing them; for sometimes the earnestness and pressure of Spirit, in their earnest wrestling with the Lord,

may

may provoke, and constrain some to use Vocal Prayer, and sometimes the using of it, helps them that are weak, to excite and make them more fervent and lively; but it is to be used with great wariness and discretion, when used in private, to take away all occasion of Ostentation or Hypocrisie, which is too incident to many, who pray, or cry out their private Prayers, of purpose that others may hear them; as the *Pharisees* did of old, whose Hypocrisie Christ sharply reproved; and he taught his Disciples the best manner to perform their private Devotions *Matth. 6. 6. But thou, when thou Prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut thy Door, Pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* Now as this Closet, or secret Chamber, may partly be understood to be outward, when men have the opportunity thereof, or any outward place of retirement; yet because it oft falleth out to good Christians, that they have no Closet, or outward Place of Retirement, many being oft confined to a Prison, where they must alwaies be in Company with others, and sometimes with bad People: In that case the Lords Servants have the Closet of their Hearts to retire into, at all times, where they

they may freely pray unto the Lord in secret: and here also they must be careful to shut their Door, to wit, the Door of their Heart, whereby shut out and exclude all idle and wandering Thoughts and Imaginations, yea all thoughts even of their Lawful occasions, that their hearts and thoughts may be wholly exercised for that space of time, towards the Lord, as he shall be pleased to assist them.

Q. *Is it not requisite and necessary that every true Christian set apart some time every day, in a Solemn way for Meditation and Private Prayer (as well as that some time is set apart once or twice every Week by a company of Christians for publick Worship) where opportunity can be had?*

A. That some part of our time is to be set apart for private Prayer and Meditation, and waiting upon God, as well as for publick Prayer and Worship, or any other Religious performance, is most clear from the practise and example of the Servants of God, both in the *Old and New Testament*; for not only the Prophets of old, under the old *Testament*, used frequent times of retirement to give themselves in a Solemn and peculiar way, to waiting upon God, Meditation and Prayer; as did *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, *Moses*,

Jes, David, Elijah, Daniel, &c. But Christ himself used such Solemn times, and so did the Apostles. As concerning Christ, it is said, *Matth.* 14. 23. *And when he had sent the Multitudes away, he went up into a Mountain apart to Pray: And when the Evening was come, he was there alone.* And a little before his Passion, or outward suffering, at the place called *Gethsemane*, *Matth.* 26. 36. he retired from his Disciples, and Prayed alone at three several times, saying, *O my Father if it be possible let this Cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* Next as for the Apostles, we find in the *Acts*, cap. 10. 9. *That* Peter *went up upon the House (in some upper Chamber) to Pray about the Sixth Hour.* Which according to the Jewish Account of Hours, was the middle of the Day. And no doubt *Peter* made it his frequent practise to retire himself thus unto Prayer. And *Paul* after his Conversion (lodging at the House of *Judas*) was exercised in Prayer, when *Ananias* was sent to him; at which time he had a Vision of *Ananias* his coming, as *Peter* had of the Vessel coming down from Heaven, as he was at Prayer in private, in the House of *Simon* the *Tanner*: Thus we see how the Lord did bless and countenance such solemn private exercises of Prayer, unto

to his Servants. And no doubt the same was the practise of the other Apostles, and fervent Christians of those times: But as to any limited time for Prayer, we find no Precept in the Scripture for Christians, or those who live in Gospel Times. Under the Law, Morning and Evening Sacrifices were to be offered up, which no doubt were accompanied with Prayer by the Faithful. *David* said, Morning and Evening, and Mid-day, he would call upon the Lord, yea, Seven times a Day; and *Daniel* used Thrice in the Day to pray unto the Lord. And surely the Devotion and Fervent Zeal of Christians, should be no less in Gospel Times, than was theirs under the Law; but rather more and more frequently exercised: Although Christians are not under any tye or command given in general; as to the number of times, how oft to be retired out of all worldly occasions; to give themselves solemnly to Prayer every day; that and many other things being wholly left to the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit, which as it teacheth all true Christians what and how to Pray; so no doubt it sheweth also the times when; which times are frequent even of the Holy Spirit, his moving of the Souls and Hearts of true and tender Christians, who are become

come acquainted with the movings and leadings of the same. And if by outward occasions such true and tender Christians may be diverted, or hindred by some inevitable lets or hindrances, as to the outward, as oft falleth out that they cannot have either conveniency of time or place to be so frequently retired, in the outward posture of Prayer; they will, and ought to take care to supply it another way; that every day (at least inwardly, if not outwardly) they have frequent times to be retired into the Closet of their Hearts (the Door of their Hearts being shut) and there in secret to Pray unto the Lord, laying aside all worldly thoughts for that time. Nor is it safe to neglect this exercise, or lay it aside upon the pretence of the constant and continual sort of Prayer, which consists in the Soul's desire after God, and may well be without all words, so much as inwardly conceived; for no doubt the Prophets and Apostles had this constant sort of Prayer, that consists in a manner wholly (or for the most part) in the will, and desire, and affections of the Soul, which kept their Hearts continually in a godly and spiritual frame; but notwithstanding of this, they used also frequent Solemn times of that other kind of Prayer, which exerciseth not

only

only the will and affections, but the understanding also, whereby they spoke unto God, at least in their Hearts, words of Prayer which some call discursive Prayer, or the Prayer of Meditation, the which is frequently necessary to be performed by every true and good Christian, for the strengthening and encreasing the Prayer of the will and desire which ought to be a continual thing, and without the said discursive Prayer used at least in the Heart, and that frequently the prayer or desire of the will groweth flat and dull, yea languisheth and is ready to die, and be extinguished, unless it be helped and assisted with discursive Prayer and Meditation, in the frequent exercise of it: For discursive Prayer when duly and rightly performed, exciteth and stirreth up the Prayer of desire, even as the blowing of the Bellows, makes the Fire to burn the better, and raiseth it into a bright and burning Flame. And the Prayer of desire, which is principally lodged in the will and affections, is like the continual motion of the heart, in the body of a living man, which must be preserved, and assisted with Eating and Drinking, and other outward Labours and Exercises of the Body, without which the inward motion of the Heart would soon fail, and be extinguished

guished. Nor is it sufficient for any to excuse their not using this kind of Prayer, by speaking to God in their Hearts, upon a pretence of not being called or moved thereunto by the Holy Spirit; for whoever do not find themselves frequently called and moved to such a Divine and Heavenly Exercise, so exceeding necessary to every true Christian, it is too manifest an evidence that they are carnal and earthly; also that they have quenched the Spirit, and resisted the same, and that they are got into a false liberty of their fleshly will, out from under the Yoak and Cross of Christ, whereas all such who keep under his blessed Yoak and Cross, to crucifie self, and all the thoughts and desires thereof, are kept in a living, tender, and sensible condition of Soul and Heart, and these feel the callings and movings of the Holy Spirit, to be frequent in them, to Prayer, Meditation, giving of Thanks, and all other necessary Duties, and such continually watch unto Prayer, and are still waiting for the Spirit's gentle and soft breathings, and the more they find them, and have experience of them.

Q. *How, and after what manner doth the Spirit help and assist the Faithful to Pray in words, either inwardly conceived, and spoken only in the heart unto God, or outwardly expressed*

ſed in the audience of others? Doth he give or dictate to them all, and every one of the words of their Prayer, juſt ſo many in number, and neither more nor leſs, and doth he make uſe only of their Underſtanding, and other powers of their Soul, in a paſſive way, ſo as only to receive what is delivered unto them; as the Conduit or Water-pipe, only ſends out the Water that is put into it, or as the Wax or Clay only ſhoweth the figure or form of the impreſſion it hath received from the Seal?

A. It is ſomewhat hard and difficult to expreſs the manner of the Spirits helping us to pray in words; for all the Operations of the Spirit, are better and more clearly felt and perceived in the Souls of them, who witneſs them, than they can be uttered or expreſſed in words. And it is very hard to expreſs the manner of the natural Operations of a man; as how he ſeeth, heareth, ſmelleth, taſteth and feeleth, or how he ſpeaketh, and how the words ariſe from his mind and heart, until they come to his mouth; and how the Mouth, Tongue and Lips, do utter them: And if theſe natural Operations, whereof we have daily experience, are ſo hard to be explained (as to the manner of them) how much more hard and difficult are they, which are Spiritual and Supernatural,

ral, to be clearly explained and expressed in Words, unless the Lord give an ability in a good measure? However, somewhat may be said to those who have a single and honest desire to be informed, that may be of service unto them; but as for such who are only curious to pry into this Mystery, and lye at the catch to take advantage, they are like to receive no satisfaction.

And now to the Question, I Answer directly and positively thus; that the Soul and its powers, are not wholly and altogether passive, and meerly receptive, or recipients in this case (as Water-conduits, or Wax and Clay in respect of the Seal) but partly passive, and partly active; as the Earth is in the production of its Fruits and Vegetables; or as the Womb of the Mother is in bringing forth of her Children, for both the Earth and the Woman, are active as well as passive, in the production of their respective Births, and bring them forth from the Seeds which they have received. And hence it is that true Prayer, as it is a Fruit of the Spirit, who has sown the true seed of it in the Soul, and causeth it to grow with its Divine and Heavenly Influences; so is it also a Fruit of the Soul, which the Soul being quickned and made active unto God, and made fruitful with the Divine seed it hath received, and the Divine

over-shadowings of that Holy Spirit of promise brings forth unto God. And hence it is that dead and fruitless souls in Scripture, which are empty of good Fruits, are compared to dry and barren Trees, and also to barren Ground, as the good and honest Heart in the Parable, is compared to good Ground, which brought forth some an Hundred Fold, and some Sixty, and some Thirty. And said *John* the Baptist to the Pharisees, *Bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance; for now the Ax is laid to the Root of the Tree, every Tree therefore that bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewed down and cast into the Fire.* Now true Prayer is one of these good Works and Fruits, which the Souls of the Faithful bring forth unto God the Husband-man, as a natural Tree bringeth forth its natural Fruit, from a principle of activity in its own Nature, as it is assisted and helped by the influences of the Heavens, and especially the heat and warmth of the Sun, and the Heavenly Dews and Rains. And certainly the Prayers of the Prophets and other Holy Men and Women recorded in the Scripture, were of this sort; God moved and wrought upon their Souls and the powers and faculties thereof, from the highest to the lowest, and caused them all to concur, and made them fruitful to

bring

bring forth Holy Prayers and Praises unto God. And thus was it also with them in respect of their Preaching and Writing the Holy Scriptures, in doing of which they were not bare passive Instruments; but partly active, and partly passive for most part at least, as is demonstrable from the variety of stile, and different manner of expression used by the Writers and Pen-men of the Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit acting upon them, according to the diversity of their natural, as well as spiritual Capacities, and gifts whether natural or acquired wherewith they were endued. So that as the Fruits of the Earth, with their beautiful forms and shapes, and diversity of Colours, proceed not from the Earth alone, nor from the Sun and Heavens alone, but from both acting partly together, and as the Child which the Mother brings forth, in the comely and beautiful lineaments and proportion of its form, is not the Mothers Child alone, but the Fathers also. So all true Preaching and Praying, which proceeds from the Spirit of God: and also true and right Meditation and Thanksgiving, or any other true spiritual and acceptable Performances, is a Birth of two Parents, whereof the Faithful Soul is the Mother, and God by the working of his Spirit

is the Father: And therefore it is that all Faithful Souls in Scripture, are called the Spouse of the Lord, and the Church is called Christ's Wife; because as the Wife bringeth forth true and lawful Children to her Husband lawfully begot of him; so the Faithful Soul brings forth as it were Spiritual Children unto God and Christ (whose Father God is) by the working of his Holy Spirit: And these Spiritual Children are good Words and Works which the Soul brings forth unto God, by the help of his Holy Spirit. And therefore all such Preaching, and Praying, and Thanksgiving, which proceed not from the Spirit of God in its inward workings upon the Soul: And also, all kind of Meditation, or any other performance or work, that is offered up unto God, without the said inward working of the Holy Spirit, is but a spurious and bastard-brood, and cannot therefore be received and accepted of the Lord, who only accepteth what is of his own begetting in the Soul. For what man will accept of a Bastard as if it were his own Child?

Now in this doth appear both the Wisdom and Love of God, that he hath made the Soul an active as well as passive Instrument, to joyn and co-operate with him in his

his work and service, and in all what he requires of it. And that there are none of the powers or abilities of the Soul or Faculties of it, from the lowest to the highest, but they may be actively imployed in some part of his service, as the Imagination, the Memory, the Reason and Understanding of Man, and its institutive Faculty, which being opened and made alive in man, through the Work of Regeneration, can see and behold God, as he doth reveal and discover himself to his Children, many times without all words, so much as inwardly conceived, or remembred, though all times it pleaseth God to make use of Words, and through them, as through the Lattes, to show himself unto the Soul; as also, God maketh use of the Will, Love and Affections of his People, in the day of his power, making them a willing People, giving them not only to think and understand what his good and acceptable, and holy will is, but also to will and to do it. For thus the Faculties and Abilities of the Soul, which God hath given it, are most nobly and excellently exercised, when they are exercised in his service immediately, and attain to their noblest and best end; and herein is the Wisdom and Love of God also manifest, that the Soul being

thus made active with all its powers, abilities, and faculties, in the works and service of God, as co-works with him, the Soul it self is the more delighted, and hath the more joy and pleasure in those works, when it reflecteth on them, and considereth them, as having a share in them, as the Mother hath in the Children whom she hath conceived and brought forth; for as it is natural to all Mothers to love their own Children whom they have conceived and born, and suffered for, so is it also natural to the Soul to love its works which it hath wrought in God, and take delight or pleasure in them, as God doth in his; and as the Mother loveth her own Children whom she hath conceived and born, and travelled in great pangs to bring forth into the World, more than she loveth any other Children whom she hath not born, although these other may be more beautified, so the Soul loveth and delighteth most in those works which it bringeth forth (as the fruit of its Womb) through the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, and it is well allowed of the Lord so to do, provided it be with due moderation, for this is a part of our own reward, even to rejoyce in good works, which the Lord hath enabled us to perform, but the praise is wholly and alone to be given

unto

unto the Lord for them all, for he it is who hath given to the Soul its being, and powers, and every ability both Natural and Spiritual, so as without him it could not do any thing that is good, neither Spiritual nor Natural. They are therefore greatly mistaken who think (as some foolishly and idly have done, and Printed it against us) that because we plead for the Spirits Immediate Revelation and Teaching, and Immediate assistance to help us in attaining the true knowledg of God, in right and true Meditations, Preachings, Prayers, Thanksgivings, &c. That therefore we lay aside not only the use of the Scripture, and other outward means and helps, but also the whole use of our Reason and Understanding as men, and of any other faculties and abilities of our Souls, and become as so many dead and unactive Truncks, Stocks or Stones, or as if we did judg that the Divine Revelations, Inspirations and Motions of God's Holy Spirit, helping us to know and understand Divine things, to Meditate, to Preach, and Pray, and give Thanks, &c. did pass through us, as a Sound passeth through a hollow Cave, or as Water through a bare Conduit. These and such like absurd consequences, are but the idle and foolish dreams of mens vain

imaginations, who (as it too much appeareth) have never had any experience of, or acquaintance with the operations of the Holy Spirit in their own Hearts. Know then that we do believe, know and witness it to be Truth, that when God's Holy Spirit inspireth us immediately, and moveth us to Preach, or Pray, or give Thanks, as it did Holy Men of God of old, and Holy Women also, even Daughters as well as Sons, and Maid-servants, as well as Men-servants, and so doth at this day; the said Holy Spirit worketh upon our Understandings and Reasons, as we are Men and reasonable Creatures, and upon all the powers and abilities of our Souls, according to their several capacities, and the Graces and Spiritual Gifts we have received from God, and all that is in us of parts, whether natural or acquired, or supernatural, and maketh them serviceable to us, and active in the work and service of God, more or less as he pleaseth. And thus when we pray or give thanks in Words, as we receive these words from the Lord (when the Prayer and Thanksgiving is purely and rightly performed) so they also spring up in us from the fruitfulness of understanding, and those parts and graces which God hath given us, and our Hearts

and

and Souls, and Spirits, are the Mothers that bring them forth, and the good matter and purposes whereof they declare, together with the good life, vertue, and force or energy that is in them, or doth accompany them. Hence true and right Prayer in Scripture is called *A pouring out of the Soul and Heart*, so that somewhat of the very inward strength, vertue and power of the Soul and Heart of man, yea of his Spirit, or what is most noble and excellent in him goeth forth in words, whether of Preaching or Praying, or giving of Thanks, as he is truly and fervently exercised in the same, by the moving and enabling of the Holy Ghost (according to which *David* (*Psal.* 103. 1.) stirred up not only his Soul to praise the Lord, *but all that was within him* [note] *to bless his Holy Name.*) Which tender and sensible hearers, whose Souls and Hearts God hath quickned and made alive, are well sensible of, and can and do well distinguish betwixt a dead and a living, or a barren and fruitful Ministry, whether in Preaching or Prayer. *Habet enim nescio quid latentis energiæ viva vox, & transmissa per aures in animos audientium fortius sonat.* Which is in English thus, *The living Voice* (saith he) *hath I know not what, something of a secret energy or power, and being*

ing transmitted through the Ears of the Hearers into their Hearts and Minds, doth sound the more effectually. And if this be true of a natural Speech, when it comes from a mans heart, and is spoke but with a natural Fervency, that it reacheth forcibly the natural Faculties of the Hearers (which borrowed speeches, or those which come not from the heart, but from the bare understanding and memory cannot do.) How much more is it apparent in words and speeches that are Spiritual, which come both from the Heart livingly touched, and affected with the sense of the things whereof the words declare, and also from the Spirit of the Lord? Hence it is said, *that Christ spoke as one having authority, and not as the Scribes*; and the Apostles Preaching was with power and the Holy Ghost, and so no doubt was their Praying.

Q. *Is it any part of Gospel Worship or Prayer to read set forms of Prayer out of a Book, whether in private or publick, or whether all Vocal Prayer used either in private or publick in Families, or Large Congregations, should not be as the Spirit of God, helps the Speakers to conceive, and gives them an utterance to bring forth Words of Prayer or Thanksgiving; we*

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cannot believe, nor are we convinced in Conscience?

A. To read set forms of Prayer out of a Book, whether in private or publick, and call that reading, Prayer, is not any part of Gospel Worship, or true and real Prayer, but rather one of the many Inventions and Traditions of Men since the Apostacy, and falling away from the true Faith, which did enter among (those called) Christians, who retained the Name, but lost the power and Spirit of the true ancient and primitive Christians. For surely if it had been any part of Gospel Worship, Christ or the Apostles would have mentioned it, and the Scripture would have born record of it, as they do of all the parts of Gospel Worship and true Christian Religion: And if it had been the Will of God, that such a way of Worship should have been used in the true Church as a common Liturgy or set Form of Prayers, it would have been used in the Apostles days; for none were so fit to have given forth such forms of Prayers, after Christ his Ascension, and giving of the Holy Ghost, as the Apostles were, who were so abundantly replenished with the Holy Spirit. But neither the Apostles, nor their immediate Successors either made or used any such set Forms of

read

read Prayers. Nothing of this kind was known in the Church, either in *Justin Martyr* or *Tertullian* his time, who lived above Two Hundred Years after Christ; for *Tertullian* telleth plainly the manner how Christians Prayed in his time, *Ex pertore sine Monitore, per Spiritum Sanctum.* i. e. *From the Heart without a Monitor* (or any thing outwardly to teach them) *and by the Holy Spirit.*

But Secondly, They who plead for using read set Prayers in the Church, do acknowledg they were not in use nor practised in the Apostles days, nor in the days of their immediate Successors; for they grant that in those early and primitive times, they who prayed in the Church as the mouth of the whole Congregation, were assisted and guided by the Holy Spirit, and that their Words both of Prayer and singing Psalms, were by immediate Inspiration. So that it is as clear as the Noon-day, that when these Divine Gifts of Praying and Singing by the Spirit were lost, and the Holy Spirit himself (the Author and Fountain of those Gifts), was in great measure departed from, the invention of reading set Forms of Prayer took place. The first Instance that I find of Peoples being put to use a composed or set Form of Prayer made

made by another, was that Form of Prayer which *Constantine* the great composed, and gave to his Soldiers to say, but yet they were not to read it, but get it by Heart; and we must consider that *Constantine* himself, at this time, was but a young Christian, and the purity of Spiritual Worship began to decline apace even in his daies, and most of his Souldiers were Heathens and no Christians; so that what they did was no president to us. But neither in *Constantine's* time, nor a considerable space thereafter do I find, that any made or composed Prayers before-hand, were used in the Church. It seemeth the Third Council of *Carthage*, about the year after the Birth of Christ, 397. did first ordain Set Forms of Prayer in the Church, to prevent or hinder mens uttering any thing, either ignorantly or rashly that might be contrary to the Doctrine then received. And to say the truth, it is altogether unfitting that men should use extemporary words of Prayer, who do not know the leading and assistance of God's Holy Spirit to direct them in the words and matter they utter, for it cannot be expected, but that frequently they will speak amiss, and deviate or wander into impertinent expressions, or words contrary to Truth, whose Hearts

and

and Tongues are not guided by the Spirit of Truth, even as a Ship, if she be let loose to Sail without a Pilot, or one to rule the Helm, cannot but go astray, and of two I have alwaies judged it the least inconvenience, since God gave me a right understanding what Prayer is, rather to use a Set Form of sound words, than to allow or permit men (without a reproof) to presume to speak words of Prayer unto God, of their own extemporary conceiving, without the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, and who do not so much as pretend unto it, as many do not. As for those who are against the using of Set Forms of Prayer, upon a pretence of Praying by the help of the Spirit, and yet plainly deny and vigorously oppose all Immediate Inspiration and Revelation, since the Apostles daies, I cannot see how they can clear or rid themselves of a contradiction, and of being guilty of an horrid Impostor and Cheat; for when they argue with such as are for Set Forms of Prayer, they seem to be altogether for Praying by the Spirit, and make it the main Argument against Set Forms of Prayer, that they quench, and limit the Spirit, but when they argue with these who are indeed for Praying by the Spirit, and who do affirm,

that

that the Spirit of God is to be kept unto in Prayer, and not to be limitted neither as to a Set Form of words formerly made and composed by others, nor as to a set time, when man or men please, to begin or end; nor as to the persons who may or do Pray in Assemblies. Here these are as great limiters of the Spirit as any, for they can, and do Pray when they will, and how long they will, begin and end when they will, which doth evince, that they have not a regard to the Spirits time and season of moving them to Pray, otherwise they would silently wait for it, seeing few (if any) upon Earth, are so repleniſhed with the Spirit, as to be ready upon all occasions, and at all times to Pray vocally, or in words by the Spirit as the Mouth of the Assembly of the People unto God; and to be sure, as no Prophecy came of Old in the will of man, so no motion of the Spirit cometh now in the will of men, and men cannot use the Spirit or its help, either to Preach or Pray, as they use a natural habit of Writing, or Singing, or Playing upon a Musical Instrument, which habits they can use at any time, according to their natural will and pleasure, because they have the command over them, and are, as it were, Masters of those natural habits and

Arts:

Arts. But it were the highest presumption, for any man to think that he hath the command of the Spirit, to use it when, and where, and how he pleaseth: For the best of men, are and ought to be the servants or Ministers of the Spirit, as *Paul* and the other Apostles were; and therefore the Spirit did command, lead and order them in all their Services, and so it did all other true and faithful Ministers, who were therefore to attend unto it, and wait the seasons of the Spirits movings, as those who at the Pool waited for the stirring of the waters by the Angel, and therefore true Christians and Ministers are bid, *Watch unto Prayer*. And said Christ unto the Apostles, *Wait for the Promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me*, Acts 1. 4. Again, If those men were for the true liberty of Praying by the Spirit, they would suffer; yea, not only suffer, but encourage any other in the Congregation to Pray vocally, or in words by the Spirit as well as they, according to the practise of the ancient and primitive Church, when the gift of Praying and Singing by the Inspiration of the Spirit did remain, but no such thing is permitted by these Men, who will suffer none but themselves, and such as they give power unto, to use vocal

Prayer

Prayer in their Assemblies, as if these Men because forsooth, they are Masters of a few Natural Arts, or at least called so, were Masters of the Spirit, and that holy and blessed Spirit of Truth, must speak in none but whom they please and give leave unto; yea, the Holy Spirit of God must be silent in his Children and Servants at their will and command. These and many other instances, which could be given, do evince, that these men, though they pretend to pray by the Spirit, are as great strangers unto it, for most part, and unto true praying by the Spirit, as they who have no such pretence; and they who have no such pretence, as to pray by the Spirit, in respect of conceiving and uttering the words of Prayer, are an hundred fold more ingenious and more commendable, on that account, for their plainness and ingenuity; who, as they have not that Divine Gift of Praying in words by the Spirit, so do not pretend unto it, but simply and plainly speak it out, that they have it not; which is a great deal more honestly done than those do who have it not, and yet pretend to it, and that pretence deceives simple People, as if their Prayers were by the Spirit, because they conceive them *ex tempore*, though

the raw indigested matter of their Prayers, and unsound expressions as they often use, as well as the great deadness and want of life, that doth accompany their Prayers, for the most part, sufficiently demonstrate they are not from the Spirit of God. But that which adds to the cheat and imposture, to make it the greater, is, that some, yea, many of them have got an Art, by affected Eloquence, or some new invented Phrases, followed with a mighty seeming Zeal and Fervency of Spirit, to play upon the Peoples Natural Affections and Passions, and excite them at their pleasure, which the ignorant People for want of a Spiritual Discerning, do imagine to be the real work and effect of Gods Holy Spirit, when for most part, it is nothing else but the animal and natural Passions in the Hearers, excited either by Art in the Speakers, or at least by the same or like Passions in them, who speak both in their Preachings and Prayings, for like stirreth up and begetteth its like, according to that of the Poet, *Si vis me flere dolendum est primum ipsitibi*, i.e. If thou wilt have me weep, thou must first weep thy self before me. And though I am far from condemning any true tenderness and contrition of Heart, or inward meltings of

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the Soul, which are caused by the real working of the Holy Spirit, which may have its visible Effects, even the shedding of Tears in him that Preacheth or Prayeth; and that more or less abundantly: yet the hypocritical show and affection of such a thing, without the reality thereof, is loathsome and abominable; and as great a Falsification against the Law of Heaven, as false and counterfeit Money or Coin is against any Earthly Law: And yet such hypocritical Tears and Flashes of feigned Devotion, kindled up by Sparks of their own raising, abounding among too many of that Tribe and Generation, as if they were the effects of Gods Holy Spirit, when alas it is far the contrary. But to such as have any measure of Sobriety and Ingenuity among them, I propose this Question to be answered in plainness and simplicity by them.

1. How can they pretend to pray by the Spirit in words, and yet they deny all immediate Inspiration and Revelation, which alone guided and assisted those who prayed by the Spirit in words, recorded in the Holy Scriptures?

2. By what Rule or Touchstone do they know when they are assisted and helped

by the Spirit to pray in words, and when
not, seeing they deny the Holy Spirit, as
he doth inwardly reveal himself in Mens
Hearts, to be the rule in any case?

3. When they are not moved by the
Holy Spirit, and that they do not find
themselves so moved as to pray in words,
whether in that case, seeing they will needs
pray, as well when they want the Spirits
help, as when they have it, and that they
plead: Natural Men, who have not the
Spirit of God, may be true Ministers of
Christ, and may and ought lawfully to
Preach and Pray, if they have an outward
Call from them; they should not rather
use the set Forms of Prayer, than their own
bare invention and wandring imagination:
for here their great Argument against set
Forms of Prayer, hath no place, to wit,
the limiting or stinting the Spirit of God,
because he who prayeth in words without
the Spirit, whether by a Book or *ex tempore*
without a Book, is in one and the same
case, if none of them pray by the Spirit, for
he who hath not the Spirit, cannot pro-
perly be said to limit or stint it. But to
this I know they will reply, that natural
and unconverted men, though they have
not the Grace of the Holy Spirit to sanctify
and

and save them, yet they have a Gift of Preaching and Praying by the Spirit, that may be useful and edifying to the Church, they have *Gratia gratis data* (as they call it) but not *Gratia gratum faciens*, i. e. Grace freely given them, but not Grace rendring them acceptable unto God; and for this they give the instance or Example of *Balaam*. To this I answer, this distinction used so much of *Gratia gratis data*, and *Gratia gratium faciens*, hath not any warrant from Scripture, but is borrowed in express words from popish School-men and Jesuits, whom at other times they call *Locusts, Come out of the bottomless Pit*. And as for *Balaam*, it was somewhat an extraordinary case, whereby God shewed his mighty Power that he had over his Spirit, to cause him to Prophecy good things concerning *Israel*, contrary to his own inclinations; and to bless instead of cursing them: but an extraordinary Example is not to be made a Rule or President unto us. And indeed they have but a sad pattern of him, whom rather they follow and imitate for most part, in loving and taking the wages of Unrighteousness, then in Prophecying or speaking by the Spirit of God, as he did, at these few extraordinary times.

And though he prophesied some words by the Spirit, yet we do not read that ever God made him the Mouth of the Congregation, to pray by the Spirit, which is the present case. And besides, though he Prophesied twice or thrice by the Spirit of God, which was extorted from him, contrary to his own evil mind and inclination; yet he was no true Prophet of God, but beareth the infamous mark of a false Prophet to this day; and we do not read that ever any one Soul was converted to God by his Prophesying or Ministry. God can command the Devils, if he please, to confess to Christ, as some of them did of old, which yet is no president for wicked men, in whom the Devil rules, to Preach and Pray in the Church. Now, whereas they say, Men may have a Gift of Prayer to use it in the Church, from the Spirit of God, and yet be not sanctified by the Spirit. I ask them, Is it such a Gift as can secure them from speaking impertinent and unsound words, contrary to the truth? if yea, then they have an infallible Gift, which seeing they will not grant unto themselves, no more will they unto these others. And if it cannot secure them from unsound and impertinent words, but leaves them at liberty

berty as much to use unsound words as sound; and that the corruption of their Hearts, who are but meer Natural Men, will soon cast the Ballance, and byas them rather to use the unsound words than the sound. Is it not more safe in that case, at least the less inconveniency of the two, rather to be tied and limited to use a form of sound words, then that their corrupt and unrenewed Hearts. However, so much they imagine it is to be helped with an unsanctified Gift, of an abused Eloquence, should be left at liberty to speak unto God, and utter before him whatever it pleaseth. But if we shall search to the bottom, what this Spiritual common Gift of the Spirit is, we shall find it to be no other but some meer Natural Gift of Memory, Elocution, and a ready or quick Fancy and Imagination, which many Heathenish Idolatrous Priests have had as much as any of them; improved with some acquired Arts of Grammar, Logick and Rhetorick, and words of Scripture abused and misapplied by them: and that which crowns all, some more than ordinary degree of confidence; that when they are thus furnished, and can or do Preach and Pray by those meer natural and artificial helps at best, to call them and

baptize them into the name of a Spiritual Gift, or the Spirits help and assistance. But leaving these men, and their *ex tempore* praying without the Spirit, which thus far I found my very Soul and Spirit concerned to discover, in true love and compassion, to their abused and betrayed Hearers and Followers; and to them also if they can receive it. I shall return to plead a little further, for the true and right manner of praying in words by the Spirit, as he is pleased to give assistance, both in the conceiving, and utterance, without any set Form, either read out of a Book, or repeated from the Memory without a Book. Because,

3. This way of Praying doth alone and only answer to the liberty of the Spirit, which is free, even the Holy Spirit of Truth, and neither will nor can be limitted, and who seek to limit him, he departs from them, in so far and remaineth still in his own freedom, altho such who seek to limit the Spirit by using Set Forms, may and do quench the Spirit, as unto themselves. But they think there is no limitting, or quenching, or grieving of the Spirit in the case, because they believe there is no such gift in the Church remaining since the primitive times,

times, as to be helped by the Spirit to Pray in words, either in the conceiving or uttering them. They grant indeed so far the help and assistance of the Spirit, and acknowledg it altogether necessary to Pray acceptably unto God, that the Holy Spirit stir up our desires and affections, and excite in us his own Graces, and the doing of this, as they say, is a sufficient helping of us by the Spirit, as well when a set Form of Prayer is used as otherwise. But why do they believe there is no such gift remaining in the true Church, seeing they generally confess it was in the Church, both in the Apostles dayes, and some considerable time since. They say it ceased with the ceasing of the gift of Tongues and Miracles; but what ground have they for this? That is a bad Argument, that because some of these Gifts which were extraordinary, and less necessary, did cease or discontinue, that therefore this also did cease with those other. And seeing they do not profess to have the Spirit or Gift of Discerning, whereby to know, whether this Gift be in the Church or no. How do they know but some have it? And as they say, the Spirit is ceased in respect to help us to pray in words, so others do as confidently say, to wit, the *Socinians* and *Pelagians*, that it

it is ceased in all other respects, and there is no need of it, either to help us to conceive words of Prayer, or excite our Affections, but that man by his free will, helped by the Scriptures, without any immediate help of the Spirit, can pray sufficiently, both with good Words and fervent Affections. And yet even these will say, they are helped by the Grace of the Spirit, to wit, mediately and remotely, by means of the Spirit. Again, Why do they limit and stint the help and operation of the Spirit, only to the Will and Affections, and to exciting the Graces of the Spirit in us. Doth not the Spirit operate upon the Understanding, as well and as nearly, and immediately and closely, as upon the Will and Affections? Are there not intellectual Graces and Gifts of the Spirit, to wit, such as properly belong to and are seated in the Understanding, as well as such that belong to the Will? Do not we read in Scripture, as well of the Spirit of Wisdom and Knowledg, Counsel, Understanding, as of the Spirit of Love and Meekness, &c. And if they will grant that there are such intellectual Graces, that belong to the Understanding, as well as others that belong to the Will; shall not these intellectual Graces be

be made fruitful by the Spirit and Understanding, in whom they reside and are placed, as well as these other in the Will: Again, Will they not grant that the Spirit helpeth us to conceive Words, at least in Meditation? Or will they confine us to set Forms of Meditation, as well as of vocal Prayer? I suppose not, seeing no such set Forms are yet extant: and they themselves take liberty to their Meditations upon religious matters, and preach to the People these said Meditations; and yet I suppose they will reckon at times, the Spirit helpeth them to conceive these Meditations, which cannot be conceived without words. And further, The words of these set Forms of Prayer, whence came they? Had the Spirit no influence upon the Understandings of those Men, who conceived them to help and assist them in those Conceptions? If they say nay, they will render the set Forms of Prayer of small value; what the People in that respect. But if they say the Spirit did help them to form these Conceptions, of the words of their set Prayers, then such a Gift is not ceased in the true Church, for it was in these men, who penned and conceived those Prayers; it may as well be in men now to conceive other words of Prayer. But 4 Pray-

4. Praying by a ſet Form, not only tendeth to limit and ſtint the Spirit and quench it, in regard of its operations, but alſo it tendeth to make the Underſtanding, and divers other Faculties and Abilities, or Powers of our Souls, and the intellectual Graces and Vertues ſeated and planted in them, altogether barren and unfruitful, in reſpect of Prayer, which yet ought to exerciſe the Underſtanding, as much as any other thing; as *Paul* ſaid, *I will pray with the Spirit, I will pray with the Underſtanding alſo.* For if the Underſtanding be limited to a ſet Form of Words, then there is no room nor place, nor liberty left for it to bring forth Prayer in any other Forms, the which ſeemeth verily as abſurd to me: As who would limit the Earth to bring forth only ſuch a limited and determined number of Forms of Vegetables, Flowers and Fruits; and not only ſo, but to limit her as to length, breadth, and depth of each Form, which we know is an impoſſible thing: for the Forms of all living and growing things, muſt have liberty to ſpring out from their reſpective Seeds, Principles, and Cauſes; otherwiſe they will not grow but wither and die: And as the Forms of Vegetables muſt not be limited and ſtinted to

such peculiar Figures and Dimensions, much less the Forms of Animals, and yet far less the Forms and Figures of Mens Bodies and Faces. For among all the many millions of Mankind, that have been or are upon the Earth, never were any two found, but did more or less, differ in outward Form and Figure, in the Face or Countenance. And surely as differing as Mens Bodies and Faces are; so much, or rather more, do the Thoughts or Conceptions of their Understanding differ; and to limit them all to one Form of inward conceptions of Words, is as vain as to stint and determine all Men to have one and the same Form of Visage or Countenance. And he who would go about to limit the Figure of the Childs Body and Face, in the Mothers Womb, to another shape and form than God and Nature hath designed to have, would do amiss, and be occasion of causing the Womb to miscarry, and render it barren, rather than any way to help it. I know it is answered by some, that the fruitfulness of the Understanding, may show it self in other Exercises and Performances, whereas man also may use his Gifts freely, as in Preaching, Writing, Conference, *&c.* But why not in Prayer, as well as in these other for to re-

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ſtrict; yea, and to hinder and ſtop the fruitfulneſs of the Underſtanding, and the intellectual Graces ſeated therein; in one reſpect is of a tendency to ſtop its fruitfulneſs, and render it barren in other reſpects. A Woman that is with Child, and hath twins in her Womb, that is hard for to make her miſcarry in the one, but ſhe will miſcarry alſo in the other; and he that ſeeks to kill one of the Twins in the Mothers Belly, ſhall be in hazard to kill the other alſo. But why ſhould the one be killed or choaked more than the other? Or why ſhould the Divine Begettings of Gods Holy Spirit in the Underſtanding of the Soul, as alſo in its Reaſon and Imagination be ſtrangled, more than theſe in the Will and Affections, ſeeing they have both one Father, which is God, as they have one Mother, which is the Soul. And alſo ſeeing what is begot by the Spirit of the Lord, in the Will and Deſires, or Affections of the Soul, hath a great dependency what is begot by the ſame Spirit, in the Underſtanding and Reaſon. For the Children and Servants of God, they love him as reaſonable Creatures, and on reaſonable accounts, and for reaſonable cauſes; yea, they have the beſt and greateſt reaſons for to love him;

and

and thoſe reaſons are preſented to the Soul by the Holy Spirit in the Underſtanding and reaſonable Faculty. And it is generally acknowledged, that the Will and Affections do commonly follow the dictates and ſuggeſtions of the Underſtanding, and according as the Thoughts of the Underſtanding, whether good or bad, do moſt prevail in the Soul, the Will and Affections, with the Deſires thereof, do imbrace what is preſented, whether it be a true and real good, or only ſeeming and apparent. So that the Wills and Affections of all Men, are ſwayed by the ſtrongeſt Dictates, which raiſe and ſpring up from their Underſtandings, and intellectual Faculties, whether true or falſe: And thus either Wiſdom or Folly ruleth the Wills of all Men, with their Deſires and Affections, and conſequently all their Actions. All good Men are led by wiſe and good Counſels, which the Holy Spirit begets in them; and all bad and evil men, are led by fooliſh and evil Counſels. And hence it is, that every good man is a wiſe man, and every wiſe man, who is truly ſo, is a good man, and every bad or evil man, is a fool, and is called ſo in Scripture, and all ſin and wickedneſs is folly, and the real effect and fruit of it.

Seeing

Seeing therefore all good inclinations, motions and Affections in the will of Man, arise from good and wise Counsels in the Understanding and Reason of Man, we must needs say that the Holy Spirit doth operate in both Understanding and Will, and begets those good and wise Meditations and Conceptions of Truth, in order of Nature, before the good Inclinations and Affections, which afterwards he begetteth and causeth to arise in the Will. But these good and wise Meditations and Counsels, cannot be without words, at least inwardly spoke or conceived in the Reason, or rational Understanding of Man. And therefore the Spirit of God doth no less help and assist the Understanding or Reason of Man, to conceive good Words, then it doth help the Will to conceive good Desires and Affections. It is therefore a great mistake and error of judgment, in those who think, that the Spirit of God doth only excite or beget in his Children, good Desires and Affections, but doth not suggest unto them, or help them to conceive good words of Meditation, and that as well to pray and give thanks as to preach. And seeing Preachers are not tyed to set Forms of words in Preaching, why should they be any

any more stinted to set forths in Praying, I cannot understand, for the Spirit of God is as near and ready to assist in the one as in the other: And if it be said that men Preach not *ex tempore*, but by study and long premeditation; and therefore they are in less danger to utter or express unsound and impertinent words in their deliberate and long premeditated Sermons, than in their extemporary Prayers. To this I Answer, 1. It is found by frequent experience, that even in those long studied and premeditated Sermons many men have uttered very impertinent and unsound, yea, false and hurtful words and expressions, for it is not much or long time to study or premeditate a Discourse that maketh it good or sound; seeing they who err in their understandings; and have received or drunk in wrong and false Doctrines and Principles of Religion, and wrong and false Traditional Glosses and Interpretations of Scripture, may Preach very unsound and erronious Sermons, altho they have taken a long time to study and prepare them: 2. According to the former Reply, If men shall study before-hand their Prayers as well as their Sermons, then they are in no greater danger to speak impertinent and unsound words in Prayer than in Preaching, but ra-

ther they are less obnoxious to such a danger, because in Prayer men commonly do not meddle with matters of controversie, or disputable points of Doctrine, as indeed it is not proper. 3. He who preacheth or prayeth by the true and real assistance of the Holy Spirit as he keepeth faithfully and carefully unto the same, altho what he doth either Preach or Pray proceedeth from premeditation. It being impossible that the mouth can utter any thing, but the heart or mind of man, must first conceive it, which is a true and real kind of premeditation, yet he needeth not any long time for the said premeditation. For when his heart and Soul is once well prepared and fitted to be the instrument of the Spirit, whether in Preaching or Praying, &c. (The which preparation of the Heart, at times, may require a considerable season, longer or shorter, as the man is more or less grown up in Vertue and Holiness) in the least space of time imaginable, as in a moment, or instant, when it pleaseth the Lord to assist the understanding by the Divine influences of his Spirit, it can be and is made fruitful to bring forth, and conceive as many solid and living Meditations of Truth, as may sufficiently yield matter, of discourse, in true and sound and living words

for divers hours. But if the Spirit should not suggest so much matter of discourse, in so short a space as a moment or instant, but only as much as to furnish the Speaker with two or three Sentences, or perhaps but one Sentence at first, before that one Sentence be well spoke, further matter may and doth oft arise from openings of life in the understanding of the Speaker to speak more, and so continually still new matter may be and oft is afforded, to continue his speech longer or shorter, as it pleaseth the Lord to require, or as in the wisdom of God a service is seen or felt. And indeed various and manifold, as well as wonderful are the waies of the Lord towards his Servants, whose mouthes he doth open either in Preaching or Praying in the Assemblies of his People. For sometimes as one waiteth upon the Lord in pure silence, and in holy fear and reverence, his heart at the present time being empty of all thoughts or meditations in respect of any particular subject or matter of discourse, and not having one particular Subject more than another in his view, but his mind and Conscience singly exercised towards God, suddenly, and as in the twinkling of an eye a particular subject is presented unto him, or the opening of some particular place of Scripture (and here the

Lord chuſeth his Text for him, and ground of his diſcourſe; or if it be to Pray, the matter of his Prayer) and his heart that was empty before of thoughts, as to theſe matters is now filled with living thoughts and meditations concerning them, being made fruitful to bring them forth by the ſhowre of Rain of the Divine influence of the Holy Spirit, in a moment or twinkling of an eye. And at other times the caſe is otherwiſe, as a little at firſt given, and then a little more, as it pleaſeth the Lord to order, and as the condition either of the Speakers or Hearers doth require it; as even in natural conceptions of natural things, thoſe men, who have a fruitful underſtanding, and a quick and ready invention, upon any ſu occaſion, how ſuddenly, and as in a moment will plenty of good and pertinent matter ariſe in them to diſcourſe of. If in a Lawyer to diſcourſe of the Laws; if in a Phyſician to diſcourſe of Phyſick, or in a Philoſopher to diſcourſe of Moral or Natural ſubjects of Philoſophy, the which extemporary and ready diſcourſes, when they come from a mans heart, and the real fruitfulneſs of his underſtanding, have alwaies more acceptance, and authority with the intelligent and diſcerning Hearers, than long ſtudied or premeditated Speeches, which

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according to the Proverb, *Smell of the Lamp*, and have more of Art than of Nature in them, and more of Form than Substance. And extemporary discourses that flow and spring freely from the fruitfulness of a man's understanding, and the noble and generous parts or faculties of a well composed and clear mind, are like fresh waters that have newly streamed from the living Spring or Fountain of them, that on that very account are more sweet and pleasant than discourses long since premeditated and treasured up in the memory, which through their oldness, contract a certain tincture, and lose of their freshness and sweetness of savour, even as water long kept in a Cistern. And if these extemporary discourses of Natural things, flowing only from a natural fruitfulness of man's understanding, have more acceptance and authority with the judicious Hearers, than long studied Sermons, dressed up with paint of Art, how much more are those extemporary Speeches to be valued, and how much greater authority have they, and true and real acceptance with all discerning Hearers, whether in Preaching or Praying, which proceed from the rich and fruitful Soil of a good and honest heart, abundantly watered and made fruitful with the descendings of the

venly Showres and Rains of Gods holy and blessed Spirit.

And if it be yet again Replyed, That the limitting or confining of him that prayeth to a Set Form, doth not hinder the fruitfulness of his understanding, for his mind and understanding is still at liberty to have as many and as various good and holy Meditations and conceptions of thoughts and words, as is possible for him to contain or comprehend; only he is outwardly limited to those forms, as to his Tongue and Mouth, whereas his mind and understanding doth remain free to abound in the greatest variety of good and holy thoughts and meditations: For the people who hear, they may also abound in these good thoughts and meditations, who notwithstanding do not open a mouth in the Assembly, either to Preach or Pray.

To this I Answer, As there are many good thoughts and meditations which God giveth unto men, for their own particular comfort and profiting, such as these which the people have who do not speak; so there are also many which God giveth for the comfort and profiting of others, and especially of the Church. And these ought not to be suppressed, but uttered and brought forth in the Lord's leading and ordering, according to his

his appointed time and season. And if the Lord move and require a man to bring forth these good things out of the good Treasure of his heart, as certainly at one time or another he will so move and require, where these good things are given to the man, not for himself alone, but also for others. Is it not a plain limitting and confining the Spirit and mind of a man, not to give him liberty either in Preaching or Prayer, to bring forth what the Lord has put in his mind for that very purpose? Is not this like the hindring the Child to come out of the Mothers Belly, when its appointed time is come, and to make her Womb its Grave, then which what can be imagined more cruel? But

5. There is this great hurt and inconvenience to limit and confine both Speakers and Hearers to Set Forms of Prayer, the one to Speak and Read them, the others to Hear them, that it cannot be supposed, that those Set and stinted Prayers will either always, or at most times suit and agree with the present states and conditions of the people. The Scripture saith, *That words spoken in season, are like pictures of Gold in Apples of Silver.* And concerning *Isaiah*, it was said, *That the Lord had given him a Word in Season to the weary Soul.* And indeed a word spoken

in season, whether it be in Preaching or Praying how sweet and comfortable it is? Now these Set Forms of Prayer being to be used according to the Calendar, such Prayers on such a day, and others on other daies, as the Calendar, or order of the Service requireth: Can these Forms be alwaies, or for most part seasonable to the peoples states and conditions, unless it could be supposed, that the inward states and conditions of mens Souls and Spirits should regularly vary, according to the Seasons and Daies of the year, which were most absurd to think or imagin. Or how do these Set Forms of Prayer, which tell us daily what to Pray for, agree with *Paul's* words, *Rom.* 28. *The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should Pray for as we ought.* And if it be said, That most of those Set Forms are conceived in such general words, that they may suit or agree with all the various states and conditions of the peoples Souls. To this I Answer, To suit or agree with them in a general way is one thing, and to suit them in their particular cases and circumstances is another. And besides, it is not upon the bare words of Prayer so much that relieveth and comforteth the Souls of people, as the life that goeth along in words that are uttered from the heart

heart of the Speaker, as God giveth him a ſenſe of the various and ſeveral ſtates and conditions of the Hearers, according to which ſenſe of their various States, he is furniſhed both with ſuitable words, and a ſuitable degree and meaſure of life to accompany them, wherewith to miniſter in Prayer, and whereby the faint and weak deſires of the Hearers many times are enlarged and ſtrengthened. But it can never be ſuppoſed, that he who only reads a Set Form of Prayer out of a Book, according to the order of the Calendar, or repeats it from his memory, can Pray with either ſuch fit and ſuitable matter of words, or can miniſter that ſuitable degree and meaſure of life, that the Hearers require and ſtand in need of, for where the words are not ſeaſonable, life will not join with them, to make them effectual and profitable to the Hearers. I know it will be hard for theſe who have not the inward experience of the workings of the Divine Life and Spirit in their own Souls, to believe or imagine, how the Speaker, who is aſſiſted to Preach, or pray with the Spirit of God, can have a diſtinct and clear feeling of the ſeveral ſtates and conditions of the people, and in that ſenſe and feeling be enabled by the ſame Spirit, who gave this ſenſe to him, to mi-

nister to them all that which is seasonable, both for matter and life. However this is abundantly known and witnessed to those who have an inward experience of life, and its workings in themselves to be a truth; for as in the natural body, one member hath a sence of its fellow members, and the more noble that one member be, its sence of the other members is the more universal, full and comprehensive: Even so is it in the Body of Christ, which is his Church; and how can it be otherwise, whenas the Scripture saith, *All the single hearted, and upright minded Professors of Christ are of one heart and soul*, as expressing a greater unity and sympathy, or fellow feeling, than that of the body; as if to be of one Soul, were more than to be of one Body; for if the parts of the Body have a sence one of another, much more the powers and faculties of the Soul have a discerning and sympathy one with another.

6. And lastly, To add no more here (altho many more reasons might be brought) against the using of Set Forms of Prayer, the whole Superstructure dependeth upon a false and wrong bottom or foundation, *viz.* an Opinion, that immediate Inspiration and Revelation is ceased or discontinued in the Church, and in and among true Christians as well

well as false; for I dare say, If they who are so zealous for using Set Forms of Prayer, did but believe that Immediate Inspiration and Revelation did remain in the true Church of God, and in and among true Christians, this would presently end the dispute, and determine the Controversie betwixt them and us, for when Immediate Inspiration and Revelation was in the Church, as in the Apostles dayes, and for some considerable time thereafter, they readily grant, that men then prayed and sung Psalms *ex tempore* without Book, by the Spirit; and therefore if they did now believe that such a dispensation is restored and restoring again, and was never altogether lost among true Christians, although much impaired and diminished by reason of the general Apostacy and prevailing power of darkness that was over the greatest part of those called Christians, they would lay aside their Set Forms, and wait for this Divine Gift. But it were too long and unseasonable a labour in this place, to prove that Immediate Revelation and Inspiration doth remain in and among all true Christians, I shall therefore refer the Readers to what our Friends have writ on that subject, and particularly to two Treatises of mine. And withal, I beseech all sober and im-

impartial people, laying aside all prejudice, to weigh and consider, upon what slender and weak Arguments that Opinion is built, which saith, *That Immediate Inspiration and Revelation is ceased in and among all true Christians.* And above all, I recommend them to the Light of Christ Jesus, and the manifestation of his holy Spirit of Truth, in every one of their hearts and Consciences, that bears witness to every necessary Truth, as they hearken to it, and with their minds turned to the said Light, and Spirit of Truth, to read and *search the Scriptures* diligently, in that very respect as the Noble *Bereans* did of old, and the Lord give them understanding in that and all other necessary things. I shall now proceed to Answer the most ordinary Objections, that seem to have most weight for using Set Forms of Prayer, whether in the Church or in private.

1. It is Objected, *That Set Forms of Prayer and Blessing the People were used in the Jewish Church, under the Law, as* Numb. 10. 35. *when the Ark set forward,* Moses *commonly said,* Arise, O God, let thine Enemies be scattered, let them also that hate thee, flee before thee; *and when it rested, he said,* Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of *Israel. And* Numb. 6. 23. Aaron *and his Sons,*

Sons, were on this wise to bless the people, saying, The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord make his face to shine favourably on thee. *And* Joel *the Prophet taught the People to pray, saying,* Spare thy People, O Lord, give not thy Heritage to reproach, that the Heathen should rule over them, wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God, *Joel* 2. 17. *And yet under the Law, people had the Spirit of God, and were to pray by the Spirit, and* Moses *and* Aaron *who were to use these Forms of Prayer and Blessing, were endued with a great measure of the Spirit, and able enough to have conceived other Forms of Prayer and Blessing.*

Anſ. From their using Set Forms of Prayer and Blessing under the Law, to argue for the use of them under the Gospel, will not hold good, for not only Sacrifices, and Offerings of Beasts, but many other things were both commanded, and allowed under the Law, which are not under the Gospel. And although *Moses* and *Aaron*, and many others in those daies had great plenty of the Spirit; yet for the sake of the people, who generally were weak and rude, they were to go along with them, in those Rudiments. No doubt *Moses* and the Prophets saw to the substance and end of those Shadows and Figures,

and

and knew well enough that the blood of Bulls and Goats could not wash or purifie the Conscience, and yet because of the general dispensation of the Law, which was to continue until the fulness of time, wherein Christ should be revealed, they were to remain in the practise of these things, which were afterwards to be abolished. And though under the Law, some Forms of Prayer and Blessing the People were to be used, yet they were but few, and very short, and such as did proceed from the Spirit of God, the matter and words of such Forms seem to carry in them some extraordinary Majesty or Glory, and to have some deep and profound signification and force with them more than ordinary, as we know, some Scripture words and sentences have more than others, as that Spirit is felt from whom originally they came. And though all the Scripture words did proceed from the Holy Spirit, yet some have proceeded from a greater measure of it, and more depth of the Divine Wisdom, and hold forth somewhat of more Majesty, and deep inward sense and mysterie, and are commonly accompanied with a greater measure of the Spirit, when they are used either in Reading or hearing them Read, or in Meditation, and may be also used at this

day in Prayer, as the same Spirit doth move any of his Servants thereunto, either in part or in whole. But we do not find that even under the Law, or at any time before, the Lord did limit and confine his People, or Servants to such a precise number of Set Forms of Prayer, and made unlawful unto them, to use any others when they prayed in publick; or that any one was ever forbid to whom God had given any spiritual gift (of uttering words either of Prayer, or of a Psalm or Song *ex tempore*, by the help and moving of the Spirit) to make use of it. But on the contrary, we find that many prayed *ex tempore* by the inspiration of the Spirit, what the Lord did give them, or put into their mouthes of words, both in private and publick, as *Solomon*'s prayer at the Dedication of the Temple; also *Esdras*'s Prayer, Chap. 9. and the Levites Prayer, *Nehem.* 9. and *Daniel*'s Prayer, *Dan.* 9. and for private Prayers, *David*'s Prayers in the Psalms, and *Asaphs*, also *Moses*, and *Samuel*, and *Habbakkuk* their Prayers with many others under the Law, are clear instances; and before the Law, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* their Prayers. Nor do we find that ever a Book of Prayers, containing so many Prayers in number, to be said or read in order, was ever made

made in the Church by any of the Prophets as Prayer, or as any part of Worship in the Law. For though divers excellent forms of Prayers are recorded in Scripture, and put into Books, yet they were not appointed by the Lord to be read or used in so many words, without adding or diminishing, as Prayers. But they were read in the Congregation as other parts of Scripture, partly for information, and partly to excite the Spirit and gift of Prayer in the Hearers. Excepting only some very few short forms as above mentioned, which did not hinder or stop the liberty of the Spirit of Prayer to express it self *extempore* in any other words. And those few Forms they used as Prayers and Blessings, we do not find they read them out of a Book, when they prayed them, but spoke them from their hearts, where they were livingly, as it were, Writ and Recorded. And tho the words of these short Forms were formerly conceived, and in that respect were old or ancient, yet as they uttered or pronounced them in a fresh and living sense of God's Spirit and power, which never waxeth old; this gave them alwaies a new luster, and put a new Savour of life in them, and made them, as it were, alwaies new to them. And thus it is at this day, with the Servants

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of the Lord, whom he hath endued with a Spirit of Prayer, who when they Pray (either in private or in publick) do frequently find and feel Scripture words of Prayer, formerly conceived and uttered by the Servants of the Lord, as *Moses*, *David*, *&c.* to arise in them from a fresh and living sense of the Word of Life, to speak them forth in Prayer, and this without any limitation of the Spirit of Prayer, but coming freely in the liberty of the Spirit, and also of Heart, Soul and Understanding; and the liberty of the Spirit of Prayer, as also of the Heart and Understanding of him that Prayeth is manifest, in this, that it is the free choice of the Spirit what words of Scripture to make use of, and to bring into the Remembrance of him that Speaketh, who doth not also limit or confine the Man's Understanding only to those Scripture Words, but giveth him liberty to make use of any others that freely arise or spring up in him, in unity with the life, as it is opened in him, as a Fountain or Well of Living Water.

2. It is Objected, *That Christ taught his Disciples, to Pray in a set Form of Words, who even then were endued with a measure of the Spirit*, Matth. 6. 9. Luke 11. 2.

Answ. Though they are thought at that

time with a measure of the Spirit, yet it was but small in respect of what was to follow: And we must remember, that as yet the dispensation of the Law remained in force; and if *Moses* prescribed unto the People under the Law some short (but of a very excellent composure) Forms of Prayer and Blessing without limiting them only to these; well might Christ teach his Disciples this short form of Prayer, which is of a most excellent and wonderful composure, in regard of its plainness and simplicity, and yet most comprehensive, in respect of the largeness and fulness of matter expressed in so few Words; a most worthy Pattern of all our Prayers, and of all that we can ask or desire; for it is a sum of all the Prayers that ever was or can be made by any of the Servants of God, and whatever is lawful to be prayed for, is most easily reducible to some of the Petitions of the said Prayer; and though it hath great plainness and simplicity of Words, yet great depth of matter, and may be compared to *Solomon*'s Temple, which had not only the outer Court, but the Holy place within it; and within the Holy place, the most Holy, or Holy of Holies: For beside the Letter and Words of it which answer to the outer Court, it hath a Holy inward Sense or Un-

derſtanding, which none can reach or come into, but who are made a Royal Prieſt-hood unto God; as none were to enter into the Holy place, but ſuch as were Prieſts under the Law. And although many Chriſtians have reached to the inward Senſe of the whole Prayer in great part, yet who can ſay he has reached to the full depth of it, and moſt inward Pith or Marrow thereof, which is as the Holy of Holies? It is a Queſtion if any ever reached into the moſt inward Senſe and Underſtanding of it, but Chriſt Jeſus himſelf who ſpoke and uttered it, in whom dwelt all fulneſs and riches of Wiſdom and Underſtanding, who is our High Prieſt, made higher than the Heavens, and all the Angels that dwell in them. But,

2. Chriſt did not limit them only to this Form of Prayer, nor did he give them a Book of Forms of Prayer, or any other Forms that we read of but this only, which therefore was rather to be a Pattern and Example unto them, according to which they were to Pray, than tye or confine them to the preciſe number of the Words of it, as is clear from *Matth.* 6. 9. *After this manner therefore* (ſaid he) *Pray ye.* And although *Luke* (11. 2.) hath it, *When yee Pray, ſay, Our Father*, &c. Yet *Luke* may be expound-

ed by *Matthew*, as one place of Scripture is oft expounded by another. So that *Luke* may very well be understood according to *Matthew* his words, thus; *When ye Pray, say,* (viz. after this manner) *Our Father*, &c. Not can this one only short Form of Prayer be a sufficient argument to make a large Book of Forms of Prayer, and impose them by constraint upon Christians: For either this one Form of Prayer taught by Christ was sufficient for the Apostles without any other, or it was not; if sufficient for them, why not also for all other Christians? And yet I know not any sort of these called Christians who confine themselves only to it, or are willing so to do, but think it needful to express their Prayers frequently in other Words; for variety and change of Words (when the matter is the same) doth help to stir up and beget in men the more Fervent Affections. But if that one only Form was not sufficient to the Apostles, it is clear that Christ did not intend by teaching them that Form, to give them or their Successors an intire System or Scheme of *Common Prayer*, but as is already said, to be a Pattern or Example unto them, and also to afford unto them matter of Meditation, as the Holy Spirit should open the deep and comprehensive Sense of it unto them;

them; so that by a due and serious, and deliberate Meditation upon all the parts and words of it, by the help of the Spirit they might be stirred up unto Prayer, their hearts being lifted up unto God upon the Meditation on every part of it, by saying *Amen* thereunto, or expressing the inward desire and prayer of their hearts in the same or more words, as the Holy Spirit should be pleased to enable and assist them. And though I cannot, and dare not recommend it to be read or said as a Prayer twice or thrice every day, in a dead formal customary way, as too many do, nor can I limit any to the strict and precise number of words in it to pray by, without using any more or less words, lest thereby I should seem to limit the Holy Spirit who is most free in all his Workings. Yet I can and do freely thus far recommend it, even unto all Christians, as well great as small, as a most worthy subject of their frequent Meditation, which the Spirit of the Lord will not be wanting to incline them unto, and assist them in. And how often in the Day, Week, Month, or Year they are to Meditate upon it, or how long their Minds and Hearts are to dwell upon the Thoughts and Meditations of it, or any other places of Holy Scripture, no outward

rule can be given, but must all be left to the free ordering and leading of the Spirit, which I certainly believe as it is regarded and minded, will be found very frequent. For it is a great part of the Spirits Work and Office to bring the Scripture words, and especially the words of Christ to our remembrance, and the more useful and necessary any words of Scripture are unto us; no doubt the Holy Spirit that Faithful Remembrancer, will bring them to our Minds, the more frequently and seasonable: And I know no words in all the Scripture that are more necessary and profitable unto us to be remembred, and often meditated upon, than those very words contained in this excellent Form of Prayer taught by Christ. And indeed, not only these few Words of Prayer taught the Apostles by Christ, but any other words of Prayer, whither Recorded in Scripture, or that are Writ and Recorded any where else, that have proceeded from a true Breathing and Spring of Life, in those who first conceived and expressed them in word or writing, may be and are of great service. So that Forms and words of Prayer which proceed in the least measure from the Spirit of Prayer, we are not against, but for, and our Souls have oft been greatly refreshed and quickned by them,

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and the Spirit of Prayer, yea true Prayer and Supplication hath oft been excited in us, at the reading or hearing read such Prayers, as are frequently to be found not only in the Scriptures, but in the Books of true Martyrs, and Witnesses of Jesus: What precious Words of Prayer have oft dropped from them? although but a little of those is recorded; and it might be wished more of these precious words of Prayer or Thanksgiving, and other Testimonies that came from the Spirit of God in them, which flowed from them had been preserved if it had been the will of God. How oft when we hear, or read, or call to mind these precious Words of Prayer, or some part of them, that any Servant or Hand-maid of the Lord has uttered, either at the Hour of their Death, or any other time by the Spirit of the Lord, which we find upon record in true History? How oft I say, and how purely doth Life spring in us, and bear its Living Witness, to the Original and Fountain of those Prayers, out of which they have proceeded, even the Pure and Holy Spirit of God and Christ? And what pure inward, living, powerful and comfortable Touches of the same Spirit have we felt at such times, confirming our Heavenly and Spiritual Unity with those dear

and precious Servants of the Lord. Therefore I say, we are not against Words or Fruits of Prayer (for all Words have a Form) that have at any time come, or do and may come from the Spirit, but are very much for them as fit and proper Subjects of Meditation and Occasions (as the Spirit of the Lord is pleased to concurr) to excite the Grace of Prayer in us thereby, or any other Divine Grace and Gift, as doth oft come to pass. Also, all such Prayers are excellent patterns and examples unto us of Prayer; but yet we cannot set them up to be read or heard, as our Prayers, so as to tye and confine our selves, or others, to the precise number of the words contained in them. Nor can we acknowledg that the bare reading or repeating the Words, are a Prayer, as many do ignorantly imagine, for all true Vocal Prayer comes from the Heart, as it is moved and wrought upon by the Holy Spirit, and the Words of Prayer simply considered, are not properly the Prayer (other wise every one that hath and useth the words should pray those Prayers which is far otherwise) but the words are but the signs and expressions of the Prayer which was in those who first conceived them, and are called Prayer only by a Figure or Metonymie of the Sign for the thing signified.

ed. And whereas it is objected by ſome, *that theſe Forms of Prayer, as they are good and fit patterns of our Prayers, ſo they may be uſed by us as Prayers, even as ſome Weights and Meaſures, which are kept as Standards to make other Weights by, may be uſed themſelves, as Weights and Meaſures.*

I anſwer, the compariſon and example in this caſe is moſt unequal; thoſe Weights and Meaſures being but dead things, whether they be Standards, or thoſe which are made by them. But all true Prayer is a living thing, and muſt have a living Form of its own, and cannot borrow the Form of another, even as a Roſe, or Tulip, or Lilly, or any other Flower or Vegetable, or Fruit of the Earth, as it ſprings upon of the Ground, muſt have its own proper living Form and Figure, and though it may be like to other things of its kind, yet it is diſtinct from them, and may, yea and doth alwaies more or leſs vary from them in form and ſhape, or figure and quantity (as well as Colour, and Taſte, and Smell (at leaſt as to the degree) and no art or device of Man can bring forth an Herb or Fruit of the Earth preciſely of the ſame quantity and ſhape, with any other of the ſame kind: And ſo it is as to true Prayer in great part; and although one Prayer may be

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like another as to the words, and may have the same words when the Prayer is short, as containing perhaps one or two Sentences, yet in this case the one Prayer doth not borrow the words of the other Prayer, but both the Prayers have their own proper form, that naturally spring from that Divine Life, and inward Sense and Understanding in the Soul from whence they come. As it was in those Prayers of Christ a little before his Passion, when he prayed three times, saying the same Words; which instance some bring for using a constant set form of Prayer; for who will, or dare say, but that those few Words thrice uttered by him, did immediately spring from Life in him, and not from a bare remembrance of the Words formerly spoken. And besides, the time being so short betwixt those three Prayers, they may be said to be as well one as three, the frame and bent of his heart remaining the same the whole time, and the desire of his heart being still one and the same, and after one thing, to wit, *That the will of his Father might be done*; when his Prayer was rather a breathing forth of his earnest desire after one only thing, and consisted at this time more in the will and affection, than in the Understanding (though it was in and with great Understanding also) then that called

led Discursive Prayer, where the Understanding and Reason is much exercised; the which sort of Breathings, after one thing expressed in one or two Sentences, and sometimes in one or two Words, yea sometimes but one only Word, as to say, *Father* (according to *Gal.* 4. 6.) is commonly called the Prayer of Aspiration, and by others Ejaculatory Prayer, and by others the Prayer of the Will; which differs much from that other kind of Prayer which is Discursive, where the Understanding and Reason is much exercised, and the Mind is filled with many Thoughts and Words of Prayer inwardly conceived, and the desires of the Soul are excited after divers things: In which case its almost impossible, that at several times a man can pray the same words without adding or diminishing, if he speak from his Heart and not from a bare Remembrance. For even in Natural Discourse upon any Natural Subject, a man that speaks from his Heart and the inward Fruitfulness of his Understanding, he will vary in expression, though the subject of his Discourse be the same. And therefore to argue for the using a constant set Form of Prayer, from the Prayer of Aspiration, which hath but one Sentence or Word in it many times, to Discursive Prayer which hath commonly

monly many, holds not good, and is as improper and unequal as who would say, when the Child cryeth unto the Father twice or thrice every day, *Father give me Bread*, using the same words; that therefore in all the Child's Discourse at any time to his Father, in answering his Father any question, or asking any other thing of him, and using many arguments to prevail with him that he may obtain it, he should still use one and the same Form of Speech. We find by daily experience, that in Converse and Society of men with men, they do not bind themselves to the same Forms of Speech, as they discourse and talk one to another; and if they did, it would make their Converse very barren and unfruitful, and would look very odd, and import in him that alwaies used these same words on the same subjects of Discourse, either want of Understanding and Judgment, or some pedantick affectation: Although in all intercourse of Speech, there are some short Forms that are constantly and commonly used: And if two Men should preach on the same Text, and have the same subject of Discourse, if they should both use the same Form of Words in kind and number, without addition or diminition, it would be generally concluded, that the one had stoln his Dis-

Discourse from the other, or at least borrowed it, and not conceived it from his own Mind and Understanding. For as much as one Man's Child differs from another in Form and Figure of Body; as much or rather more, doth the birth of his Mind and Understanding, in conceiving and uttering the matter of his Discourse differ from another's, yea, as the Children of one and the same Father and Mother (though ever so many) do considerably differ one from another in Form and Figure, especially of the Face: So every Man's Speech or Discourse, whether in Preaching or Praying, will somewhat differ one time from another, if he bring it from his Heart and Understanding, and not from his bare Memory, although the stile and manner of expression may be much the same. And commonly those Men whose Understandings are naturally more pertinent and fruitful, when they Speak or Write on the same Matter or Subject, the Forms of their Speech or Writing do most differ, and so it may in Prayer; whereas other Men whose Understandings are not so Fruitful in Words, but they may be as Fruitful, and sometimes more Fruitful in Good and Holy Affections, when they Preach or Pray the Forms of their Words and Speech, may seem to be well

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bear the ſame, though alwaies there will be ſome difference, as much as one Child who is very like to his Brother, doth differ from him, or as one Apple may be like another of the ſame Tree, and yet when narrowly conſidered, do ſtill differ. And here theſe laſt Mens Prayer, whoſe Hearts and Wills are more fruitful in Holy Affections than their Underſtandings are, in great variety of Words and Eloquent Expreſſions, may, and oft do Pray with more Life, and Authority or Power, than the other, becauſe the main ſtrength and force of Prayer, conſiſteth in the good and holy Will and Affections. But in this and all other things, as every one hath his proper gift, one ſo, and another otherwiſe, ſo he is to exerciſe it, and not to limit or confine one another, but give liberty to each other in the Holy Spirit of Truth, and growing up together in God's Heavenly Garden, as lovely Plants and Flowers, each one having their proper Shapes, Forms, and Fruit, all of a ſweet and pleaſant ſmell and taſte, and of a lovely Beauty, and all uſeful and profitable one to another, and to the Church of God in general, without any envy or grudging, but rejoycing in the manifold and various Graces and Gifts of God freely beſtowed upon all, and all growing and ſpring-

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ing from the ſame Holy Root and Ground. And now theſe two main Objections being Anſwered at length (which did require the opening or explaining of divers things which may be of ſervice to ſome) I ſhall proceed to anſwer ſome others, wherein I may be more brief.

3. They object, *That ſome having good Hearts, and great Love, and ſtrong Affections towards God, and Heavenly and Divine things, yet have weak Heads and Underſtandings, and are not able well to conceive Words of Prayer in their Underſtandings. And therefore ſhould not theſe be helped by hearing or reading ſet Forms of Prayer, well and Pioufly compoſed?*

Anſw. None have ſuch weak Heads or Underſtandings if they have good Hearts, or any meaſure of True Love and Affections towards God and Divine things, but the ſame Spirit of Love which beget in them thoſe good deſires and affections, hath been, and is alſo in them a Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding to beget in them, or help them to conceive good Thoughts and Words of Prayer ſufficient for them (as is above proved and made apparent) for the Spirit of God works upon the whole Soul and all its powers and abilities, and as well upon the Underſtanding as the Will, and whatever the

Will

Will cleaveth unto, or the Heart loveth, is first proposed and represented to the Understanding in Thoughts, as lovely and desirable. And if a Man have not Elocution, either none or small, God requireth but of every man as he giveth him; and he who cannot Pray with his Mouth (as in the case of those who are Dumb) if he pray with his Heart shall be accepted. But he who can read a Prayer, if his Heart and Understanding were as well, and as much exercised in Divine and Spiritual things, as in Earthly and Temporal, and had as great a love to them, and delight in them, would soon find himself furnished with Words *ex tempore*, whereby to express the desires of his heart to God: And indeed in true and real Love, there is for most part an admirable Force or Virtue to make a man Eloquent, both to praise the thing he loveth most, and also to find out Reasons and Arguments, wherewith to perswade to the obtaining it. He who loveth a Woman and greatly desireth to have her to be his Wife, he needeth not go to a Book and steal or borrow an Oration or Form of Discourse to speak unto her, in order to perswade her; and if he did, it would but coldly come from him; and if she did know it (as a very small measure of good dis-

discerning cannot but discover it) that it was a borrowed Speech, she would not perhaps accept it, nor answer it. But the natural and simple words that flow from the love of his Heart, would most prevail and have the greatest force. It is not Eloquence or Excellency of Speech, that God requires or regards, the profit and service of it is unto men, and not unto God. It stirreth up mens Affections to make them the more fervent; but doth not more prevail with God, than more simple and mean words; yet God will have every man to use his own Gift, and it is but want of Love to Divine and Heavenly things, and want of exercise in improving and stiring up the Gifts which God hath given them, that makes them think extemporary prayer by the help of the Spirit, to be so hard and difficult. Why may not Men find Words and Expressions as ready and easie, wherewith to seek a thing of God by the help of his Spirit, as they find them wherewith to seek a thing from Men, which few or none do in borrowed Forms of Speech composed by another, unless it be to some King or great Person, that some who are feeble minded and want courage, make their address by borrowed Words, or by something writ on a Paper, or by some other they get to speak for them?

But none of all these things is necessary in this case; for God invites the weakest and meanest to call upon him, as well as the strongest, and the meanest words, where the Heart is sincere are accepted of him; yea, suppose the words were broken and imperfect, and not according to the *Grammar* of the Language, they may be used (at least) in private. And as for publick Prayer in the audience of an Assembly or Congregation, these whom God calleth to such an Employment or Office, he will no doubt sufficiently qualifie and furnish them, for he who made the mouth, can easily put words in it. As when *Moses* excused his being sent to *Pharaoh* for his want of Eloquence. The Lord said unto him, *Who hath made man's Mouth? or who maketh the Dumb, or Deaf, or the Seeing, or the Blind? Have not I the Lord? Now therefore, go and I will be with thy Mouth, and teach thee what thou shall say.* Ex. 4. 11. And tho the Lord sent *Aaron* to assist him, who was naturally more Eloquent; yet God also put Words in *Moses* his Mouth, as well as in the Mouth of *Aaron*. And when *Moses* Prayed unto God in the Mount, that *Israel* might prevail over *Amalek*, we do not read that *Moses* borrowed any words from *Aaron*, or that *Aaron* put any words into his mouth; only *Aaron* and *Hur*, help-

helped to hold up his Hands. And surely *Moses* in his Prayer here, used not any Form of Prayer borrowed from *Aaron*, or any body else; altho some from this passage [and *Moses* his being less Eloquent than *Aaron*] have argued for using set Forms of Prayer. But we cannot find it in Scripture, that *Moses* stood with a *Book of Common Prayer* in his Hand, and Read or Prayed out of it upon the Mountain, but that he had in his Hand a Rod.

4. They Object, *That many by Reading or Hearing read set Forms of Pious and Godly Prayers (both in publick and also in private) have found their Souls and Hearts refreshed thereby, and what they did read or hear read, hath oft stirred up true and living Breathings in them, and hearty Desires and Supplications, with Thanksgivings unto God. And it is hard and uncharitable to judge that all they who read or hear set Forms of Prayer (in private and publick) and seldom or never use Extemporary Prayer, are altogether void of true Devotion, and never Pray by the Spirit, because they always (or for the most part) Pray by the Book.*

Answ. I do readily grant that Reading, or hearing Read Words of Prayer, whether in publick or private (if these Words have been originaly conceived by the Spirit of Gods

help and assistance) may and do accidentally refresh the Souls of True Christians, and may and do excite or stir up true and living breathings, and hearty Desires and Supplications in them, with Thanksgivings unto God at Seasons: But then it is so, when the Reading or Hearing those words of Prayer, are put in their true and right place, and accounted and valued to be what they are indeed, and not another thing, which is to say, when hearing or reading those words of Prayer, are accounted hearing and reading as they are, and not Prayer, which they are not for hearing and reading are things differing in Nature and Kind from Praying, and ought not to be confounded with the same; and the greatest service and advantage that reading or hearing words of Prayer read by another unto us, have or indeed can have, is but Preparatory, to excite or stir up unto Prayer; and then only can they do so much, but as the Spirit of the Lord is pleased to concur and give his assistance with them. But if People confound these so differing things, and set up the bare reading, or hearing what is read in the place or room of true Prayer, as if they were true Prayer it self, they may provoke the Lord to withdraw that concurrance and assistance of his Spirit, from reading and hear-

ing those words, however so good, yea the Scripture words, and altogether blast, and make ineffectual and unprofitable those exercises, which otherwise and in themselves considered, are lawful and profitable. For the Lord who is a God of order, he will not have the nature of things confounded but keeped distinct: He will not have a thing judged or esteemed to be what it is not, or above what it is; the tendency of which in this very case, is down-right Superstition and Idolatry; as to judg that to be Prayer and Divine Worship, which is no such thing; for whatever is not true Prayer and Divine Worship, and yet is called so, and really so judged and esteemed, is false and a sort of Idolatry. For I know no midst betwixt true Divine Worship, and Idolatry under that head of Worship, seeing all pretended Divine Worship is either true or false; and if false, it is a sort or kind of Idolatry. Now it deserves to be well examined and considered, whether the putting reading, and hearing read set Forms of Prayer, either in publick or private, in so high a place as many put them (if not most or all who use them) hath not provoked the Lord to deny that concurrence and assistance of his Spirit unto those exercises, which otherwise he might and

would give, especially when those read Prayers do altogether exclude those real Prayers, which come from the Spirit of God, as he enables the Speakers to conceive and bring them forth in words, without any set Form. And why is it that many sensible and tender Souls feel no Vertue in many or most of those read Prayers, and on the contrary feel great deadness and heavyness, and great weights and burdens in hearing them? which hath occasioned many to with draw, and seek where to find a People, where true and living Prayer and Praises are to be found, which effectually reach to the Soul, and carry their Souls and Hearts along to join with them. For neither is it true Prayer to hear the words of him that prayeth most effectually by the Spirit of God, but where the Heart and Soul joineth and goeth along by the moving of the same Spirit both in Speaker and Hearers, that is true Prayer: Again, if People should not so far mis-place those things, as to judg reading, and hearing read Prayers to be Prayers, or any part of Divine Worship, yet if they lean too much on them, and rely more upon them than they should, and have more an eye and regard unto them than unto the Spirit of God; this also will make their reading and hearing, or any other

exercise ineffectual unto them, and altogether unprofitable.

But Secondly, I shall neither be so hard nor uncharitable (but am very far from it) as to judg that all they who hear or read set Forms of Prayer in private and publick, and seldom or never use Extemporary Prayer by the help of the Spirit, giving them to conceive or express words of Prayer, are altogether void of true Devotion, and never Pray by the Spirit: For my Charity is so large and free in that respect, that I believe among all People, *Jews* and *Turks*, as well as *Christians*, and many of those called *Heathens*, if they do believe in one only God, and are Faithful to what they know, they are at times visited with gentle breathings of the Spirit of God, which helps them truly to Pray unto him, with desires and affections, and true breathings of the Soul after him. It is one thing what the Lord doth by high and soveraign acts of his wonderful Mercy and Condescendence to the Children of Men; and another what he doth to them, upon terms of their doing what he only requires of them, and is pleased with, in them.

5. It is Objected, *If the Spirit of God doth dictate unto any Men in our days the words of their Prayers, in that case, those words would*

be as good Canonical Scripture, as any of the Prayers of David, *or of other Holy men, and their Psalms recorded in Scripture; which were absurd to affirm.*

Answ. These words of Prayer which come truly from the Spirit of God, helping and assisting the Speakers to conceive and express them, are no doubt real Divine Testimonies of God's Spirit, Light and Life, according to their measure; but to compare or equal them to Scripture (as we do not) so to infer it is unequal. For if all the Divine Testimonies which originally did livingly and purely proceed and spring from the Spirit of God, had been writ, and aded to the Scripture, the bulk or volumn of it had been too great; yea many Volumns would not have contained them, and it had been impossible for men to have read them all. Therefore God hath Wisely and Graciously ordered it by his Divine Providence, that a part of these many Testimonies which have come from his Spirit should be left upon record, and preserved to all future Generations, which were writ by some of the most Eminent of his Holy Prophets and Apostles, and which have been unquestionably received in all Ages among the best sort of Christians, who have had a true discerning, to savour these Holy Wri-

tings and Teſtimonies, and that what hath been to writ, ſhould be generally received as unqueſtionable Teſtimonies and Oracles of God's Holy Spirit, and acknowledged as a publick Standard, Rule and Touch-ſtone, whereby to judg and examine all Doctrines and Principles of Religion held forth by any. Now it was altogether neceſſary that this publick Standard and Touch-ſtone of all Doctrines and Principles of Religion, ſhould not be too large and voluminous, but compendious and eaſie to be read over, and diligently ſearched and examined in a ſhort time, to find how the Doctrines and Principles Preached by others, did agree, or diſagree with them, as the Spirit of the Lord ſhould give an Underſtanding, and ſo according to receive or reject them. And God in his Infinite Wiſdom hath ſeen fit that the Writings of the ancient Prophets, Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, ſhould only be this publick and univerſal outward Standard, as having ſome peculiar excellency in them of plainneſs and briefneſs, and comprehending much matter in few words, and writ from a deeper and larger meaſure of the Divine Wiſdom, to which no writings or words ſince uttered, are comparable in equality, or in the ſervice they were deſigned for. And more might

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be said as to this matter, to show the excellency of the Scriptures above all other writings or words, the Scriptures being generally received and believed, and that worthily, to be pure and infallible Testimonies of Truth, without any mixture of humane weakness, error or mistake, as they were originally writ and continue at this day; as to the main, and giving sufficient evidence and witness to necessary Truths, which we are not bound to believe equally concerning any other writings, as being wholly and throughout Infallible, and therefore may take leave to question them, and accordingly as we find them to agree or disagree with the said publick Standard of the Scriptures Testimony to receive or reject them, in part or in whole. And admitting or granting that many Testimonies of Good and Holy Men, their Preaching, Praying and Writing, should wholly agree to the Scriptures Testimony, and that they have also proceeded from a measure of the same Spirit, purely and without all mixture, yet they are not to be made equal with that which by the Appointment of God, and general consent of Christians, is made the publick Standard of Truth: As in respect of an outward Testimony, for in all Cities and Corporations the publick Standard of Weights

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and Measures is of greater and more Authority, than any others however so just and agreeable to them. And this Objection hath no more force or weight against Preaching and Praying by Divine Inspiration now, than it had Two or Three Hundred Years after the Birth of Christ, when it is generally confessed the gift of Preaching and Praying by the Immediate Inspiration of the Spirit, did remain in the Church, and yet their words were not held equal to the Scripture in that day. And tho we may not add our Words and Testimonies (the purest of them) to be any part of Scripture, yet we dare not be so Presumptuous as to say, there never was, nor ever shall be more Scripture, than what we have at present; for it is probable more of equal Authority with what we have, hath been, but is lost, and possibly some judged *Apocryphal*, by one sort may be of equal Authority and value with God, and other good men, with other parts of Scripture that are acknowledged. Neither are all Christians yet agreed upon the number of the Books of Scripture, but it sufficeth that so much is generally agreed upon, as is sufficient to be a publick Standard. And lastly this Objection can be equally retorted upon the makers of it: For they do hold, *That all the Words in their*

their Set Forms of Prayer, are either plain expreſs Scripture Words, or deduced and deduceable from them, by juſt and neceſſary conſequence of Truth, and what is ſo deduced, are the real Commands and of Oracles God; as they (or at leſt as moſt of them) ſay; as in the example of Infant Baptiſm, which they hold to be a command of God, conſequently a Divine Oracle, and yet they confeſs it is no where expreſſed in Scripture, but only by conſequence deduced from it; the which notwithſtanding is juſtly denyed by many to be any firm or ſure conſequence of Scripture. And if none of their ſet Forms of Prayer have come originally, no not in the leaſt meaſure from the Spirit of God in thoſe who Penned them, it ſeemeth a great derogation to thoſe Prayers, and to render them of ſmall value with the People; therefore ſuch who uſe this Objection againſt us, ſhould take heed leſt they derogate from their own Prayers, and ſo fall under the cenſure of their own Brethren. But perhaps ſome will acknowledg, that the Spirit helped thoſe who Penned theſe ſet Forms of Prayer, not only by exciting or moving their affections, but alſo by working upon their Underſtandings, and make them fruitful to conceive the matter or words of theſe Prayers, but not Immediately, or by an Immediate Divine Inſpiration, as the Spirit wrought

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in *David* and others who preached and prayed by Immediate Inspiration, so as to make no use of their judgment and reason, to find out the matter, or chuse the words they expressed. To this I answer, that *David*, or any other of the Prophets and Apostles, when they were Immediately Inspired to Preach, or Pray, or Write, made no use of their Judgment and Reason, or other Faculties and Abilities of their Souls; or that the Spirit of God which wrought in them, made no use of them, but as meer passive Subjects and Recipients, is a thing commonly alledged by those men, but no where proved, either from expres Words of Scripture, nor from any just and necessary consequence therefrom. Yea the contrary is manifest from Scripture, that the Spirit of God wrought upon, and used the Understanding and Rational Faculties, and Abilities of the Prophets and Apostles, not as meer passive Instruments alwaies, or most frequently, but made them fruitful to work, and co-operate with him; as *Paul*, who Preached and Prayed by Immediate Inspiration (as they do confess) said, *That he had laboured more abundantly than the other Apostles*: which was not a meer bodily labouring, but a travelling or labouring in Spirit more especially, wherein his Understanding

ing and rational Faculties were concerned, as well as his Will and Affections, which is also clearly implied in his following words, *Yet not I, but the Grace of God with me.* So that it was not he alone, nor the Grace alone, but the Grace of God co-working with him, that caused this earnest and fervent labouring in *Paul's* Soul. Nor is there any more reason to say, that the Understandings and Reasons of the Prophets and Apostles when they spoke by Immediate Revelation, were wholly passive, than to say, their Wills and Affections were wholly passive, or their Mouths and Tongues when they spoke. And the diversity of Stile in the Pen-men of the Scriptures (which varieth not only according to the natural gifts and parts (wherewith they were more or less endued) but also according to their Education and Acquired Parts) doth sufficiently show, they were not altogether passive. The stiles and manner of expression used by *Isaiah*, *Paul* and *Luke*, clearly show their Education, differing from the homely stile of *Amos* a Country man, who said, *He was no Prophet, nor the Son of a Prophet.* *Paul* said he could Pray not only with the Spirit, but with the Understanding: meaning certainly that his Understanding might be active and fruitful, both to himself

ſelf and others alſo. It's true, the ſame *Paul* ſpeaketh of a caſe, wherein the Spirit Prayeth, but the Underſtanding is unfruitful, as it happened at times when a man was ſo inſpired and moved by the Holy Spirit, that he ſpake in an unknown Tongue, as appeareth from 1 *Cor.* 14. 13. Wherefore let him that ſpeaketh in an unknown Tongue, pray that he may interpret. And in this caſe it is like, that as the Soul's Underſtanding was unfruitful, ſo it was unactive, and was uſed only by the Spirit, as a paſſive Inſtrument like a Pen in the Hand of a ready Writer: As when the outward Ear of a man receiveth the Voice of a ſtrange Language, which he doth not underſtand. There are other caſes alſo, wherein the Underſtanding and Rational Faculties of man may be laid aſide, and not uſed by the Spirit of God, when he Immediately Inſpireth him; as when the higheſt and moſt noble Faculty of a Man's Soul or Mind is excited, and wholly imployed and exerciſed by the Spirit, which by ſome is called the Spirit of the Mind, by others the Viſual or Intentive Faculty of the Soul, which ſeeth God as he is pleaſed to reveal himſelf; and whereby a man hath a ſenſe or perception of Divine or Spiritual things, without any uſe or exerciſe of his Underſtanding,

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Reason or Imagination, as in a Spiritual Rapture and extasie. But for most part the Understanding and Reason was used and imployed, yea and the Memory also, by the Prophets and Apostles, so as to remember what they had read or heard, and seasonably to apply it to the present occasion, when they spoke or writ by Immediate Revelation or Inspiration. For Immediate Revelation or Inspiration doth not exclude the use of means whether inward or outward, it only implyeth a most near and close, or intimate conjunction and union of the Spirits Operation with the Soul in the use of means, as well as when they are not so used: And *Solomon*, who is generally acknowledged to have writ both the Books of the *Ecclesiastes* and *Proverbs*, by Divine Immediate Inspiration and Revelation; yet he saith, *Eccles.* 12. 10. *He sought to find out acceptable words*, &c. So that the Spirit of God made use of that Faculty or Ability of his Soul (which is called by Logicians Invention) as well as his Judgment; not that he had any trouble or difficulty to find out those acceptable words, but the Spirit making his Understanding Fruitful with plenty of matter, and seasonable and suitable Words, he freely and without any trouble or disquiet of his mind, used such acceptable words. 6. It

6. It is Objected, *That even they who pray* ex empore *by the Spirit in a Congregation of People, do ſtint or limit the Spirit in the Hearers, and their Underſtandings and Attenſions, to conſider what they who ſpeak ſay, no leſs than if they heard a Set Form of Prayer read unto them.*

Anſw. This is altogether denyed; for firſt, the Spirit of God in one can never be thought to ſtint the ſame Spirit, or limit the operation thereof in another, or many, becauſe the Spirit is the ſame in both, and doth ever accord and agree with it ſelf in all its operations, and what it moveth the Speaker to Speak, it moveth and inclineth the Hearers to conſider, and where true Unity is witneſſed with one inward voice and cry of their Hearts, they ſpeak the ſame things unto God, their Hearts at every Sentence, ſaying *Amen*, to what they feel and perceive to come from the Spirit of God in them who ſpeak. Nor doth it hinder the underſtanding and attention of the Hearers, in being exerciſed towards the Spirit's workings and openings in themſelves: For many, yea and moſt times, what the Spirit ſpeaks through one, doth excite the underſtandings of the Hearers into more faithfulneſs, ſo that they have more opened and revealed unto them by the Spirit, than what

the Speakers words did import; as oft also the like falleth out in Discoursing upon a natural subject, where the words do signifie more to some Hearer, than they do to the Speaker himself, exciting clearer and fuller notions or ideas of Truth in him: And thus even natural arts have been perfected, when the first Inventers had but some small beginnings; others by those beginnings have been excited to find out more perfect things; as the bringing of the first words of a Sentence to a man's Memory which he hath forgot, doth oft excite his Memory to remember the whole Sentence. Nor is the Mind of Man so strait or narrow, but it can well enough attend to what another Man sayeth in Preaching or Prayer, and also to what God inwardly doth suggest, or reveal unto him: And the liberty of the Hearers understandings and Spirits is manifest in this also, that after one has Prayed in words, if the same Spirit reveal any thing to be spoken in Preaching or Prayer by any of the Hearers, he is free to do it without giving any offence, which was the order prescribed by *Paul*, to the Church of *Corinth*.

7. It is Objected, *That set Forms of Prayer are most for the edifications of the People, who by often hearing of the same Prayer can commit it to Memory, and so it passeth to the Understanding, and*

and remaineth with them; whereas extempora-ry Prayers paſs away for moſt part, as a Sound, and are little remembred.

Anſw. This alſo is altogether denyed, *viz. That ſet Forms of Prayer are moſt for the edifi-cation of the People*; for admitting or ſuppoſing that the Hearers commonly by oft hearing theſe ſet Forms had them all perfect in their Memory, yet it will not follow that they have a true underſtanding of them; for men may and do remember many things which they do not underſtand. But again, either theſe ſet Forms of Prayer are few or many; if few, they cannot give a large underſtanding to the People, if many, they cannot be well remembred by them, and if they were as many as would fill many Volumns, they cannot give ſo great occaſion to edifie and inform the underſtanding, as theſe Prayers which proceed *ex tempore*, by the Inſpiration of the Holy Spi-rit in Holy men, which muſt needs be many more, and containing much more matter, than the greateſt Book of ever ſo many ſet Forms of Prayer can. For on this account it is as I reckon, why men are not tyed to ſet Forms of Preaching, but are allowed freely to exerciſe their gift, becauſe that is more edifying to the People, than ſet Forms to Preach by would be unto them. And the ſame reaſon is as

good concerning Praying as Preaching. And tho words of *ex tempore* Prayer without the Spirit, pass away as an empty transient sound, yet by and with the help of the Spirit both in speakers and hearers, they take impression both upon the understanding and memory of People, who are made tender and sensible: And tho all or most of the words spoke be not remembred, yet if they have that good effect to open the understanding, and work holy Affections in the Souls of People, it is sufficient to edification: For where a thing is well understood, a man needs not concern his memory much about it: As he who understandeth the reasons and grounds of rules and precepts of Art, he can practise the things belonging to that Art better with his understanding, without thinking on those rules, then he who only hath the rules of Art in his memory, but understandeth not the reasons and grounds of those rules. Nor can these forms be so edifying as extemporary Prayer by the true Spirit of God, because they cannot so universally in all particulars reach to the various states and conditions of Peoples Souls. And to say that all the various states of Peoples Souls, if there were a thousand of them, are comprehended under the words of those general set forms doth not satisfie. For as on the one account set forms

are

are too few, and strait or narrow to reach all particular states, and seasonable times; so if generals can serve, these set forms commonly used are too many; because one only set form of Prayer contained in a few words may in general reach to all Peoples states, and surely none doth or can better do that, than the Prayer which Christ taught his Disciples. And if men deny that they have any assistance of the Spirit to help them to conceive these set forms of Prayer which they use, were it not better to collect together forms of Prayer out of the Old and New Testament, putting all these words and sentences together which are most to the same purpose, or if belonging to several purposes that have some fit connexion together; and so the words of their Prayer would be pure Scripture words, without any mixture of the words of man's Wisdom, which are oft times very unsound.

8. They Object, *That many who Pray extempore contradict one another in their Prayers, ask contrary things; and therefore both such Prayers cannot be from the Spirit of God, which as it is one in Nature, so in Operations, ever agreeing and in unity with it self.*

Anſ. The whole weight and stress of this Objection, lyeth upon Persons and Men, and not upon the Principle, to refute or resel it in

the leaſt, and as for theſe who moſt commonly pray contrary one to another, they are ſuch, who do not pretend or lay claim to pray by Divine Immediate Inſpiration. But if both ſides ſhould lay claim thereunto, and yet contradict one another in their Preaching or Praying, it only proveth that the men are faulty, ſometimes on the one ſide, and ſometimes on the other, and ſometimes they may be faulty and wrong on both ſides, but the Principle remaineth ſtill unblamable: nor hath this Objection more weight now than in the daies of the true Prophets of old, againſt whom the falſe Prophets both Preached and Prayed, and pretended to be alſo Divinely and Immediately Inſpired, as well as the true. And laſtly, This Objection can be well enough retorted, for they who pray by Set Forms, may pray contrary one to the other. The Greek and Latine Churches had both Set Forms of Prayer, and prayed one againſt another, as well as preached, when that great Zeal and Schiſm came to be between them. And how many Preach againſt one another, who pretend to Scripture and good Reaſon, and alſo to good Literature, which yet is no juſt reflection on any of theſe three things, but only on the Men or Perſons, who abuſe them.

9. It

9. It is objected, *That* Paul *in his Epistles used the same Forms of Salutations and Prayers, both at the beginning and end of them frequently, and therefore he could not be against Set Forms, who used them so much himself, as Grace, Mercy and Peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, at the beginning of divers of them, and at the end, Grace be with you, &c.*

Answ. These little short Forms, being (as is already said upon another occasion) expressions and significations of the Prayer of Aspiration and Affection, and not of that called Discursive Prayer, which require divers Sentences, do not infer that Set Forms may be used in Discursive Prayer. For when the Heart and Affection is earnestly and zealously bent and moved to desire one only thing, it may be expressed in one Sentence, and as oft as that Affection is renewed, the expression of it in the same Sentence, as it freely ariseth in the Heart, may be renewed also: but men find it not so in Discursive Prayer, or other Discursive Exercises. As when men at this day commonly write Epistles one to another, they retain some little common Forms of Salutation, at the beginning and end of their Epistles, which are commodious and not thought strange nor

disliked. But if a Man, yea, if a Schoolboy at School, should alwaies write to his Father or Kindred, the same words throughout, without any alteration, they would say he were a fool and void of understanding, to be so barren as to have no new matter in his Epistles, even when daily occasion is given.

10. It is Objected, *That God is not delighted with variety of words, and novelty of matter and method in new Stiles, and flourishes of Tropes and Figures, and is far unlike those squeemish Stomacks, or delicious and lustful Appetites, who every day seeketh after variety of Dishes, or else they cannot be satisfied; it being the Heart that he requireth.*

Answ. It is true, God is not delighted with variety of Words and Sentences as Man is, or after the manner of Men: but yet, he requireth that every man make use of the Graces and Gifts which he hath given him; and they being the works of God, and proceeding from him, he may be said to delight in them, and in their manifold Variety, as he doth in all his other Works, altho not after the manner of men, yet after such a way and manner, as becometh his infinite Greatness and Perfection. And tho it be the Heart that God mainly requireth and regardeth

eth; yet he commandeth us to love and ſerve him, with our whole man, which is our reaſonable ſervice; and we are to love him with all our Underſtanding, as well as Heart, as the Scripture ſaith, and the beſt and moſt fruitful part of our Underſtanding; and all the Gifts belonging to it, our Judgment, Reaſon, and Elocution, may and ought to be employed in his Service, and in this particular Service of Prayer, as Holy Men of old, who uſed their Underſtanding and Reaſon, and ſuch Elocution alſo and variety of Expreſſions, as God had given them: and ſo ought every Man to do, as the Spirit of the Lord leads him, and works upon him; and thoſe Gifts he has given him without affection or ſtretching and ſtraining beyond his meaſure. And tho we find no affected or artificial Eloquence in Words of Man's Wiſdom, which is carnal and from below, yet a true Eloquence and excellency of Speech is to be found in many places of Scripture, both in the Preachings and Prayers of the Lords Servants that ſtand on Record, far ſurpaſſing all the Eloquence that either the Maſters or Diſciples of that artificial Eloquence, ſo much admired in the World, ever arrived or ever can arrive at, meerly as ſuch. And likewiſe the ſame Argument

gument may be retorted, in respect of using any words at all in Prayer, whether *extempore* or by Set Forms, because to speak properly God is not moved by any words, and hath need of them, who knoweth all our most secret Thoughts and Desires without words. And if it be said that words are used to Men, because they have a leisure to excite their affections; then I say, and variety of words with new matter, as the Heart of Man conceiveth them by the help of the Spirit hath the like service, and that more effectually, as abundant experience doth prove; then Set Forms of Prayer, read out of a Book, especially when the Reading is accounted Prayer, whereof we find no instance in Scripture, that ever at any time Reading was accounted Prayer, though Prayer of the Heart and Affection may and oft doth follow and accompany serious Reading and Hearing.

11. They Object, *That* Solomon *forbids men to be rash with their mouth, or to let their Heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God* (saith he) *is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth, therefore let thy words be few.*

Answ. But he doth not conclude, therefore let thy Prayer be in a Set Form of Words. For here only he reproveth vain Repetitions, and the Pharisaical Spirit, which

which thought to be heard for their much speaking, as Christ did also reprove the same. And certainly *Solomon* was far from forbidding all *extemporary* Prayer, in these words, *Eccles.* 5. 2. Which may very well be conceived in few words as well as many; for he used it himself at the Dedication of the Temple, as at other times, although I shall willingly grant, that *ex tempore* Prayer without the Spirit (where the mind of man irreverently rambleth and wandreth into airy Imaginations) is here and every where else forbidden in Scripture: And whereas some also except against *ex tempore* Prayer, as being monstrous like, because of the smalness or shortness of time, betwixt the conception and birth of that kind of Prayers; however this argument may be used against *extempore* Praying without the Spirit, that can have no place against Praying by the Spirit, unless such Objectors will also cry out against the *ex tempore* Prayers made by the Prophets and Apostles of old, as being monstrous or Monsters on that account; but I hope they will be more sober. And tho in some respect the time be very short, as perhaps a moment or instant betwixt the conception and birth of Prayer, as to the words or expressions, yet the Substance and Root

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of Prayer, wherein the very Essence and Life of true Prayer doth chiefly consist, is long time conceived in the Soul, before its outward Birth or Expression in the Mouth, and is a constant abiding thing in the Soul.

12. *Many who pretend to pray by the Spirit, and have used, or do as yet use* ex tempore *Prayer, discover many weaknesses in those Prayers, as vain Repetitions, impertinent Sayings, light and airy Phrases, and unsound Matter and Expressions, to the causing many People to abhor the Sacrifices, rather than to be piously and religiously affected with those Prayers. And seeing few, if any have a Spiritual Gift of Praying* ex tempore, *with words conceived by the help of the Spirit; and that yet publick Prayers in Congregations and Assemblies of People are necessary; is it not better to use Set Forms of Prayer in sound Words, then to adventure on* ex tempore *Prayer without the Spirit.*

Answ. As for all these weaknesses, which Men have discovered or may discover in *ex tempore* Praying, they reflect, as is said, upon the Men, but not upon the Principle. And when most of these Weaknesses have appeared, it is in Men, who pray without any pretence unto immediate Inspiration of the Spirit, or belief that they have it: and

such

such Men, I confess, should lay aside their *ex tempore* Praying, and wait upon the Spirit of God, to receive help from him to pray, first believing that it is to be received, as it is waited for. And these also who pretend to pray by the Spirit, and yet do nothing so, but are meerly guided by their floating and airy Fancies and Imaginations, should desist from such a practice, and come with silence both outward and inward, and in the same wait for the true Spirit of Prayer to help their infirmities, whether with Sighs and Groans that cannot be expressed, or with distinct and audible expressions. But surely, these who indeed pray by the Spirit, keeping close and chastly to the same throughout, from first to last, bewray none of these Weaknesses; and though they may use Repetitions, yet if the Spirit move to use them, and that there be any vertue or savour of Life in them, they are not vain but profitable, and like the warbling Notes, repeated Sounds of a skilful Musician, in a musical Descant, which rendred the method more sweet and pleasing; and such serious, grave, and weighty Repetitions we find oft in the *Psalms* of *David*. And these also who use Set Forms of Prayer, have need that they use not vain Repetitions; for some who

who have heard these Set Forms, have been as much disgusted and offended with the many Repetitions they find there, as others with those elsewhere. Now it may at times happen, that a man may be partly assisted and helped by the Holy Spirit to conceive words of Prayer, and good and fervent Affections, and yet through Humane Weakness, may discover some frailty in his Prayer, who yet is not altogether to be rejected or discouraged. But great care ought to be had by all, who make mention of the Name of the Lord, that they bring forth nothing but that which is pure and without mixture, even a pure Offering and Sacrifice unto the Lord, who is pure. And suppose few or none, in many places or Congregations, have the Spiritual Gift of praying *ex tempore*, by the Spirit helping them to conceive the words of Prayer, yet there is no need of praying by a Set Form; for if the Principle and Doctrine of Truth, were once received and believed, that God giveth his assistance by his Spirit to all who desire it, and whom he thinks worthy of it, or fit to bestow it on, for the edification of others, to pray *ex tempore*, with words truly edifying, quickening and refreshing, as People did but wait a little time in sincerity for such a Divine

vine Gift, it would be given to a sufficient number of them, and until it be given it is better to pray with affection of Heart, though without all words, and wait in silence for a further gift and measure of the Spirit, than to be rash or hasty to pray without the Spirit, either *ex tempore* or in a Set Form. And to help the weaknesses of many who cannot bear well long, or much silence, such as are serious and best affected, as they find a freedom and liberty in the Lord, may read unto the People, or unto their Families, the Holy Scriptures, which was an ancient custom in the Primitive Church; but that Reading is not to be used as Prayer or Worship, but only as a mean to excite Prayer and good Affections and Desires in them, as it pleaseth the Lord to concur and give his Blessing unto the same, and also for Information and Doctrine.

What is there said all along in this Treatise of Praying by the Spirit, helping to conceive the words of Prayer, is also to be understood of Singing and Praising God with a *Psalm*; and the Reasons and Arguments drawn from Scripture for the one serve equally for the other; for all Singing and Praising with a *Psalm* or

Psalms

Pſalms, in Goſpel times, was a Spiritual Gift, as is clear in the Church of *Corinth*, when ſome had a *Pſalm* to utter or expreſs in words (and others went along with them in Unity of Spirit, making Melody in the Heart, though not audible noiſe, pronouncing the ſame words) as ſome had a Doctrin and ſome a Revelation, ſome an Interpretation, 1 *Cor.* 14. 26.

THE END.

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